

By Dr John Campbell
Hermippus Redivivus:

OR, THE 1484aaa5

SAGE'S TRIUMPH

OVER

Old Age and the Grave.

WHEREIN A *Glance*

METHOD

Is laid down for Prolonging

THE

Life and Vigour of MAN.

INCLUDING

A COMMENTARY upon an Antient
INSCRIPTION, in which this great
SECRET is revealed; supported
by numerous Authorities.

The whole interspersed

With a great Variety of remarkable and
well attested RELATIONS.

L O N D O N:

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Dr. Bronckhorst
Pag 115



P R E F A C E.

*I*F Custom had not established a Sort of Necessity of pre-fixing something of this Kind to whatsoever is sent abroad, the following Sheets might have been safely trusted without a Preface. For, in the first Place, this Book is published, not to excite, but to gratify the Curiosity of the Lovers of Learning, who have enquired after it very diligently, and express'd a great Desire to see by what Arguments Dr. Cohausen endeavoured to support so extraordinary a System. And, on the other Hand, again, the Book itself is so methodical, and every Thing therein follows so naturally, that the Reader is led in a direct Road from the Beginning to the End; and as he is in no Danger of mistaking his Way, there is the less Occasion for affording him supernumerary Lights in an Introduction like this.

But, since we have undertaken to write a Preface, it may not be amiss to observe therein, that very few Books contain so great a Variety in so narrow a compass. The Author appears to be a Man of great Reading and deep Reflection, for most of the Books he cites are equally scarce and curious; but then he does not, like many of the German Authors, content himself with barely embroidering his Margins, which may be sometimes done by transcribing those of other Writers, but generally gives you the Passages that make for his Purpose, and very often Characters of the Authors themselves, and this alone renders his Work
of

of great Utility to such as desire to be acquainted with the Merit of Books seldom to be met with, and which, on that very Account, are swelled to a high Price.

Another remarkable thing in this Treatise is the Choice the Author has made of his Quotations, which are as entertaining, as they are instructive; nor is it easy to conceive, without reading his Book, how it is possible for a Man to enliven so dry a Subject, as his seems to be, in the Manner he has done. The Extracts he has given from Bacon the Monk, plainly shew the prodigious Knowledge of that extraordinary Person, who, when all Europe was involved in the thickest Mist of Ignorance, seems to have possessed alone such a Treasure of Science as would have rendered him a very considerable Man, even in the most enlightened Ages, and may possibly engage some able Writer to give us such an Abridgement of his Works, as the ingenious and learned Doctor Shaw has done of those of Chancellor Bacon, and the famous Boyle, which if judiciously performed, and illustrated as they are, with proper Notes, would do equal Service to the Republic of Letters, and Honour to our Country.

The Stories he inserts of Eugenius Philalethes, Signor Gualdi, and the celebrated Flamel, are not only extremely diverting, but may contribute also to the procuring us some well-written History of the Pretenders to the Philosophers Stone; which, as it would be a very curious and entertaining Piece, so if written from good Authorities, and handled in a proper Manner, it might be of considerable Use, since the Number of Operators in that Way has of late Years mightily increased, especially in this Country, where there are many who have given themselves up to that delusive Study, though they endeavour to conceal themselves, and their Labours, with the utmost Secrecy, in order to avoid that Ridicule, which generally attends the Professors of the occult Sciences. In Germany, however, this kind of Learning

Learning is still in Vogue and Credit, and it is scarce possible for any one to obtain a considerable Reputation as a Man of Letters, who has not a Touch at least of Chemistry.

With Respect to the Capital View of our Author, in recommending that Doctrine which he deduces from the Inscription in the Front of his Book, it is certainly managed with great skill and Ingenuity, so that if the Reader should at least reject its Probability, he must be obliged, notwithstanding, to confess, that the Writer has not employed his Pains to little or no Purpose, but has introduced so many curious Enquiries, and thrown out so many valuable Hints, that his Book must be allowed a Performance of great Merit, whatever becomes of Hermippus and his Secret. Of this, the Author himself seems to be very well aware; and, therefore, while he pushes his Arguments with the greatest Vigour, and appears evidently to have his Design much at Heart, he, notwithstanding, takes all along such Precautions, as are necessary to defend him from the Imputation of being a whimsical, conceited, or pedantic Writer, as almost any other Man would have been thought, who had undertaken such a Task. Upon the whole, there is in this Dissertation such a Mixture of serious Irony, as cannot but afford a very agreeable Entertainment to those who are proper Judges of Subjects of this Kind, and who are inclined to see how far the Strength of human Understanding can support philosophical Truths, against common Notions and vulgar Prejudices.

Having thus taken the same Liberty with our Author, which he has done with other learned Men, the whole is submitted to the Judgment of the candid Reader, who will, doubtless, retain some Tenderneſs for the Pains that have been taken for his Amusement, and not pass a harsh Censure on a Piece which, we may boldly say, has nothing in it dogmatical, tedious, or offensive.

HER-

THE PREFACE

The first of these is the fact that the work is a translation of a French work, and that the translator has endeavored to preserve the original style and spirit of the work as far as possible.

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Hermippus Redivivus:

OR THE

Art of Preserving YOUTH.

IT was the laudable Custom of the Antients, to perpetuate the Memory of all singular Events, and especially such as in any Degree might be useful to Posterity, by Inscriptions. These had a peculiar Stile, in which three Things were principally regarded; Succinctness, Elegancy and Clearness. It would have been inconvenient, and indeed preposterous, to have drawn such Pieces into a great Length, considering the Places in which they were erected; that is to say, Markets, Temples, or publick Roads; or, the Matter whereon they were inscribed, which was Marble, or some other kind of hard or curious Stone. But, if Brevity was necessary, Beauty was likewise convenient. Where there is nothing striking, the Memory soon loses a Thought. To retain what we are told, we must receive at once both Pleasure and Instruction. This Neatness of Stile, was peculiarly cultivated by the Antients. It came originally from the *East*, where all Science was taught in Parables and Proverbs. In *Greece*, they refined upon this, and laid down the Rudiments of Knowledge in Aphorisms. Amongst the *Romans*, this Manner of teaching was much esteemed, and nothing more admired, e-

ven in the politest Ages, than Sentences. If they were afterwards abused, and improperly applied, this ought not to discredit them, since without Question they ever did, and always will, appear with the utmost Propriety in that kind of Writing of which I am speaking. Lastly, as to Perspicuity, the Antients were exceeding careful, and the Difficulties that now arise about the true Meaning of such Monuments of their Learning as have reached our Times, are rather owing to the Misfortune of losing such Accounts of their Customs and Manners, as might have made them easy and familiar to us, than to any want of Clearness in the Stile of their Inscriptions.

Men of different Professions have employed themselves, with different Views, in the Study of those large and curious Collections, which learned and industrious Persons have made of such Remains of antient Wisdom, as, having escaped Oblivion, are now safely repositied in the Cabinets of the Curious. Amongst these, we are chiefly obliged to the celebrated *Thomas Reinesius*, who undertook to make a Supplement to the laborious Work of *Gruter*, and has therein preserved an infinite Number of valuable Inscriptions; and amongst the rest, this, which hath given Occasion to my Treatise;

ÆSCULAPIO ET SANITATI
L. CLODIUS HERMIPPUS,
QUI VIXIT ANNOS CXV. DIES V.
PUELLARUM ANHELITU,
QUOD ETIAM POST MORTEM
EJUS
NON PARUM MIRANTUR PHYSICI:
JAM POSTERI SIC VITAM DUCITE.

The learned *Délechamp* has given us a different Account of this Inscription ; according to him it should be read thus.

L. Clodius Hirpanus
Vixit annos CLV. dies V.
Puerorum balitu refocillatus
Et educatus (a).

The famous *Cujas* gives it us in the following Manner.

L. Clodius Hirpanus
Vixit annos CXV, dies V.
Alitus puerorum anhelitu (b).

These various Readings, though it cannot be denied that they affect the Sense strongly, do not, however, much concern the Subject. The first tells us, that *L. Clodius Hermippus* lived one hundred and fifteen Years, and five Days, by the Breath of young Women, which is worthy the Consideration of Physicians and of Posterity. According to the Commentator upon *Pliny*, the Name of this Long-liver was not *Hermippus*, but *Hirpanus*, and the Date of his Life one hundred and fifty-five Years, and five Days, with this additional Circumstance, that he did not live by the Breath of young Women, but of young Men. The Lawyer again reduces the Life to the same Standard, and contends only, that his Name was *Hirpanus*, and that he received this extraordinary Nourishment from the Breath of Youths.

If therefore we take this Inscription as it stands by the Consent of all these Writers, it informs us of a Fact, equally curious and important, *viz.* That a certain Person, no Matter whether his Name was *Hermippus*, or

(a) In Notis ad L. vii. c. 48. *Plinii Natural. Hist.*

(b) Ad *Justiniani Novel* : 5.

Hirpanus, reached a very advanced Age by the Use of the Breath of young Women, or of young Men. Now, whether this was a real Fact which actually happened, or whether it be the Invention of some malicious Wit amongst the Antients, in order to exercise the Talents of Posterity, I concern not myself: It appears to me, in the Light of a physical Problem, which may be expressed in very few Words, *viz.* Whether the Breath of young Women may probably contribute to the maintaining long Life, and keeping off old Age? This is what I propose to examine; this is to be the Subject of my Discourse, in which, if what I deliver be entertaining and useful, the Reader need not trouble himself much about the Truth or Falsehood of the Inscription.

But it will be necessary, before we come to the strict Examination of this Proposition, to remove some previous Difficulties out of the Way. In the first Place, therefore, let us enquire, whether the Term of Life be a fixed or moveable Thing. Some of the most learned among the *Jews*, have thought it absolutely determined by the Decree of God, and have alleged various Scriptures for the Proof of this (c). The most antient Philosophers, both in *Chaldea* and *Egypt*, thought the Life of Man depended upon the Stars, and by pretending to predict its Duration, plainly shewed, that they thought it absolutely under the Influence of the Heavenly Bodies (d). The *Stoicks*, if they meant the Power of the Stars, by what they stiled *Fate*, were also of this Opinion; but whatever they meant by *Fate*, most evident it is, that they thought the Life of Man, as well as every other Thing, depended thereupon (e); and that consequently it was unalterable by any Means, within the

(c) Manaf ben Israel de term. vitae. (d) Diod. Sicul. Hist. lib. 1. Diogen. Laert. (e) Plut. de placit. Philosoph. Diogen. Laert. Senec.

Compass of human Power. Now, if there be any Truth in these Opinions, if there be the least Foundation for any one of them, the Case is clear, that all further Enquiries are vain; for to what end should we search out the most probable Means of extending Life, when we are certain, that this is a Thing beyond our Capacity? or, at least, uncertain whether it be or not:

In order to open the Way to further Speculations upon this curious and important Subject, I will begin with the Solution of this Difficulty, and take upon me to prove, that contrary to the Notions of these Divines and Philosophers, there is no such Thing as a settled Term of Life by the Law of Nature; or which is the same thing in other Words, by the express Will of Divine Providence. In the first place, I lay it down as an absolute Certainty, that Contingency is essential to that Mode of Rule pursued by the Divine Power, in the Management of sublunary Things. Causes indeed necessarily draw after them their Effects; but then I deny, that there is any Chain of necessary Causes, and, because it would require much Time and Space to establish this Doctrine generally, I will keep close to my Subject, and content myself with proving it, as to this particular Point. It is a thing agreed on all Hands, that the Law of *Moses* propounded chiefly Temporal Blessings, and amongst these, long Life; now this is absolutely incompatible with the Doctrine of a fixed Term, and therefore if there be any Passages in the Scripture which look this way, we must interpret them in some other Sense, for the part must accord with the whole, and it is idle to allege a few detach'd Passages against the Scheme of the whole Book. Again we are told, that God commended *Solomon* for praying to him for Wisdom, rather than long Life, or for Riches, which plainly shews, that he might

might as well have asked for either, as for it ; but if this Inference displeases, take the express Decision of God thereupon ; who, in the same Place, says, that if *Solomon* walked in the ways of *David* his Father, he would lengthen his Days (*f*). Add to these Arguments, that it was the constant Practice of the best Men, and such as most intimately knew the Will of God, to pray in Terms irreconcilable to such an absolute Decree. Thus *Hezekiah* desired that his Life might be spared (*g*). *Elias* (*h*) and *Jonah*, that theirs might be shortned (*i*).

But, to put the Matter out of Doubt, one need only consider, the Choice given to *David*, by the Prophet *Nathan* (*k*), of War, Pestilence, or Famine, in consequence of which, he chose Pestilence ; now, if there had been a fixed Time of Life, how could this Choice have possibly taken Place ? All the Persons who died of the Pestilence, must, according to the Doctrine I am refusing, have died if there had been no Pestilence, because the decreed Term of their Lives was expired. On the whole, therefore, it is apparent, that a fix'd Term of Life is inconsistent with the Reason of Things, which is what we call the Law of Nature, wherein, if I may be allowed the Expression, there is a settled Contingency. It is contrary to the Principles of Religion, as deducible from the natural Light of our Understandings, and it is directly contrary to Revelation, so that I take it for granted, that the most pious Man in the World, that will seriously consider these Arguments, must remain satisfied, that the Order of Providence, the Will of Heaven, or God's Decree, which are the Terms used by the Divines on this Subject, hath determined nothing absolutely, concerning the Term of Life.

I

(*f*) 1. Kings. iii. 11, 14. (*g*) Isaiah, xxxviii. 3.
 (*h*) 1. Kings, xix, 4. (*i*) Jonah iv, 3. (*k*) 11. Samuel
 xiv, 13.

I am next to speak of the Opinions of the Astrologers, which of old, were ascribed to *Esculapius*, who, it is said, laid down this Maxim, That all Things below, were governed by the Motions and Aspects of the Stars. Against this Notion I have two Things to offer; the first is, that they could not possibly know this so to be, even granting it should be true, because they were absolutely ignorant of the true System of the Heavens, and of the Motions of those Bodies, whence they would derive so great a Power. This puts their Authority out of the Case, for if we cannot depend upon them as Astronomers, nothing in Nature can be more ridiculous than to pretend to lay any stress on their Judgment in Astrology. To be convinced of this, we need only consult the authentick Accounts we have in antient Authors of the *Chaldaic* System (*1*), from whence it appears to be equally false and absurd; false, as it is repugnant to the Experience and Observation of succeeding Times; and absurd, as it is contrary to the unalterable Principles of Reason and true Science. The other Argument I allege is this, That since the Authority of the Antients is out of the Case, if there be any modern *Stoicks*, who are still of this Opinion, they must shew us the Grounds of it, and this, not from such Chimerical Notions as are laid down by the pretended Sages in judiciary Astrology, but from the settled and unquestioned Principles of true Philosophy. When they do this, or at least, when they attempt to do it, it will be Time enough to examine how far this new System of theirs is rational. In the mean time, I will conclude this Point with that settled and most reasonable Maxim of the Civil Law, *That about Things which are not, and about Things which cannot be made appear, there is the same Reason*; that is, there can be no reasoning about them, they must be considered in the same Light, since nothing can be more idle than

(1) Diod. Sicul. lib. i. Stanley's Chaldaick Philosophy.

than to dispute about the Consequences of a Thing, before the Thing is made manifest, or we have any real Ground for a Dispute.

We have now done somewhat towards establishing the Foundation of our Doctrine ; but there is still another vulgar Notion in our Way, which must be removed ; or to speak more properly, explained. By this I mean the prevailing Opinion that the Life of Man is limited to a certain Term, and because we see People grow old at a certain Age, by which I mean grow infirm and decrepit ; for Oldness has not so much Reference to Time, as to Condition ; and I account him old, who has lost his Strength, rather than one who is advanced in Years. But, because I say the Maladies that attend old Age come on in most People at a certain Period, they are held to be necessary ; and if there were any Truth in this, we should be stop'd again, here would be a new Barrier through which we should be able to find no Passage, and when we talked of retarding old Age, People would expect we should make them young again. It is requisite, therefore, that this Matter be explained, and set right, and that the Reader be satisfied how far the Incommodities of old Age are of Necessity, and how far the Product of natural Causes, which may be affected by the Skill and Art of Man.

The human Body is a Machine, actuated by an immortal Spirit, and which is more to my Purpose, fabricated by an Almighty Hand. It cannot be supposed, that this Dwelling should be so slightly, or so injudiciously contrived, as that it should wear out in a very short Space of Time. This does not seem very agreeable, either to the Nature of Man, considered as a rational Creature, or with that infinite Skill and Wisdom which is evident in the Composition of the human Frame. When therefore the Divines say, that *Sin* introduced *Death*, they

they seem to speak philosophically ; and if I may be allowed to explain their Meaning, I should be inclined to say, that Diseases and Death are not incident to the human Body by the Will of God, or, which is the same Thing, by the Law of Nature, but were superinduced by the Follies and Vices of Men, which carry in them naturally the Seeds of Death ; and therefore, if it be an Evil, we ought not to accuse Providence, but our selves. Yet I will readily acknowledge, that taking Things as they now stand, and have stood for many Ages past, there is no Hope left of Immortality in this Body, or even of prolonging our Lives to three or five hundred Years ; but still I affirm, that there are no settled Periods in Nature, no inevitable Laws which conjoin Weakness and Infirmary with a certain Number of Years ; but that it is very possible, nay, and very practicable too, for a Man to extend the Length of his Life, much beyond the common Date, and that without feeling the Incommodities of Age ; for other wise, this would be rather avoiding Death, than preserving Life.

To prove this, I shall first make use of Reason, and next of Experience : I shall make it evident by Arguments, that it may be so, and by Instances, that it has been so ; and then if any Sceptic has a Mind to doubt the Truth of my Doctrine, I shall leave him in his own Road, where his Ignorance will infallibly bring upon him the just Punishment of his Obstinacy, an hastier Extinction of Life than he need otherwise have suffered.

All wise Men have agreed, that Nature, by which I mean the Wisdom of God manifested in the Order of all Things, acts uniformly in every Respect, and assigns proper Periods to all Things. *Solomon says, There is a Time to be born, and a Time to die (m)* ; a short Maxim, which may admit of a long Commentary. The Life of

B

Man

Man does not certainly consist in Eating and Drinking, in Waking or Sleeping, or in the indulging by turns the Gratifications of his many Appetites; for if this was so, the usual Term of Life would certainly be long enough, and there have been actually Instances of People who have been so satiated with the round of these trivial Actions, as to be weary of Life, before Death was at Hand; and in Consequence of this Weariness, have hastened it. But as the Divine old Man justly observes, *Art is long, and Life is short* (*n*); that is, there seems to be no just Proportion between the Powers of the Mind, and the Force of the Body. We hurry on from Infancy to Childhood; from Childhood to the Age of Man; from thence, to what is stiled middle-aged, and then we decline apace into Feebleness, Misery and Dotage. Can any Man think that this is the true Order of Nature? Has Nature given so many Years to Pikes, to Eagles, and to Stags, nay, and to Serpents, at the same Time that she denies it to Man? Be it far from us to believe this; let us rather stifle our Pride and Conceitedness, and believe that the shortness of Life flows from the Weakness and Wickedness of Man.

But it will be said, that Death is not only the End of Diseases, but that old Age is as much a Disease as any other, and certainly brings it on. That the human Frame is so constituted as not only to encrease and arrive at Perfection, but to decay also, and wear out. That the Flame of Life grows after a certain Time weaker and weaker; that the Solids lose their Tone by Degrees, and that the Vessels grow cartilaginous, and become at last Boney; so that Death, by old Age, is a natural Thing (*o*). Be it so, I am not contending that

Men

(*n*) Vita brevis, ars longa, occasio celeris, experimentum periculosum, judicium difficile, Hippocrat. Aphorism. I.

(*o*) Boerhaave, Institut Medic. Sect. 474, 475, 1053, 1054.

Men may live for ever, or that they may live as I said before, three or five hundred Years; but this I say, that old Age is the only Disease to which we are subject by Nature; and that from this, it is very possible, Men may be much longer defended than they usually are by the help of Art. This I say, principally on the Grounds I have before laid down, viz. That the human Body is a Machine admirably contrived; from whence, I infer that it may, with due Care, be kept in good Order, and that the true Ends of Life, being such as require a much greater Extent of Time, than the ordinary Period of Life, allows; therefore it is more likely, that this unreasonable Brevity should be the Effect of our Want of Skill, of Care, or of Attention, than owing to any Law laid down by the omniscient Author of all Things. These are my Principles; which I submit to the strictest Examination, if they can be demonstrated to be either false or precarious, I shall be sorry for myself and for Mankind; since undoubtedly they carry in them a strong Appearance of Truth, and of the most pleasing Kind of Truth, that which attributes Glory to God, by displaying his good Will to Man. But lest any one should say, that many Things look fair in Speculation, which deceive us in the Practice, I will, after thus exposing my Doctrines to the Rays of Reason, examine it next by the reflected Light of Experience, and surely, if this shews us no Flaws in it, the Reader and I shall proceed chearfully on our Journey, and he will no longer consider me as one amusing him with a learned Paradox, but as the Unfolder of a great and useful Truth.

Against the common Opinion, the most authentic Records of History enable me to allege, that though vulgar Experience be opposite to my Notions, yet that shortness of human Life, which is now become common, was not so always, nor is yet so in all Places. I shall

not

not dwell long on what is said of the great Age of the Antidiluvian Patriarchs, I shall content myself only with a few Observations that are necessary to my Purpose, the Truth of which cannot be drawn into Dispute. In the first Place, let it be noted, that though Men lived to be then very old, yet the Species was new. The human Body had been but lately taken out of the Earth by it's Creator, and retained therefore a great deal of its primitive Strength. We say commonly in our Days, that a Man who lives fast, takes Pains to destroy his Constitution; and on the Principles of *Moses*, we cannot but allow, that the Fabric of *Adam's* Body must have been much stronger, and better compacted than ours; and this it was that preserved him so long after he had lost that Tree of Life, or Rule of Living which was suited to his primitive State. My second Observation is, that these Patriarchs lived in another World; I mean a World otherwise constituted than ours, and after another Manner; and therefore, what we are told of their Age, is not more incredible, than a Multitude of Facts which Experience and Evidence oblige us to believe true (*p*). I thirdly observe, that, if with stronger Constitutions, and in a better disposed World, Men lived to various Ages, but most of them nine or ten Times as long as we; there seems to be no repugnancy in admitting, that by great Care of our Constitutions, and our helping by Art the noxious Qualities of the several Elements as they are now disposed, Men may maintain as great a Distinction in the Periods of their Lives or Deaths.

It is very remarkable, that not only the Sacred Writers, but all the antient *Chaldean*, *Egyptian*, and *Chiniese* Authors, speak of the great Ages of such as lived in early Times, and this with such Confidence, that

Xeno-

(*p*) Burnet Theor. Tellur. Cudworth System. Intellect.

Xenophon, *Pliny*, and other judicious Persons, receive their Testimony without Scruple. But to come down to later Times, *Attila* King of the *Huns*, who reigned in the fifth Century, lived to 124, and then died of Excess the first Night of his second Nuptials, with one of the most beautiful Princesses of that Age (q). *Piastus*, King of *Poland*, who, from the Rank of a Peasant, was raised to that of a Prince, in the Year 824, lived to be 120, and governed his Subjects with such Ability to the very last, that his Name is still in the highest Veneration amongst his Countrymen (r). *Marcus Valerius Corvinus*, a *Roman* Consul, was celebrated as a true Patriot, and a most excellent Person in private Life, by the elder *Cato*, and yet *Corvinus* was then upwards of 100 (s). *Hippocrates*, the best of Physicians, lived to 104 (t): But *Asclepiades*, a *Persian* Physician, reached 150 (u). *Galen* lived in undisturbed Health to 104 (w). These Men do Honour to their Profession. *Sophocles*, the Tragick Poet, lived to 130 (x). *Democritus*, the Philosopher, lived to 104 (y); and *Euphranor* taught his Scholars at upwards of 100 (z): and yet, what are these to *Epimenides* of *Crete*? who, according to *Therompis*, an unblemished Historian, lived to upwards of 157 (a). I mention these, because if there be any Truth or Security in History, we may rely as firmly on the Facts recorded of them, as on any

Facts

(q) Priscus apud Jornandes. Bonfinius Histoire de Hongrie, Decade premiere l. ii. p. 75. (r) Guagnini rerum Polon. p. 64. Herbert de Fulstin. lib. i. p. 13, et Harchnoch, lib. i. cap. 2. p. 68, &c. (s) Cato de re Rustica, Cicer. de Senectut. Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. (t) Euseb. Chronic. Petav. Rationar. Tempor. Tom. i. p. 96. (u) Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 14. (w) Fulgos. lib. viii. c. 14. p. 1096. (x) Euseb. Chronic. (y) Petav. Rationar. Tempor. Tom. i. p. 96. (z) Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. viii. cap. 14. (a) Diogen. Laert. in vit. Epimen.

Facts whatever; and consequently, we have the strongest Assurance, that even an hundred, or an hundred and twenty, is not the utmost Limit of human Life.

But what is still more to our Purpose, it is not this, or that Country, in which such aged Persons are to be found; we meet with them in many, I was going to say, in most Climates. We have it on good Authority, that in *Béngal*, there lived a certain Peasant, who reached the Age of 335; and having received Alms of many Infidel Princes, had his Pension continued to him by the *Portugueze* (b) in *Cambaja*. *Pliny* gives us an Account, that in the City of *Parma*, there were two of 130 Years of Age, three of 120, at a certain Taxation, or rather Visitation, and in many Cities of *Italy*, People much older, particularly at *Ariminium*, one *Marcus Apponius*, who was 150 (c). *Vincent Coquelin*, a Clergyman, died at *Paris* in 1664, at 112 (d). *Laurence Hutland*, lived in the *Orkneys* to 170 (e). *James Sands*, an *Englishman*, towards the latter End of the last Century, died at 140, and his Wife at 120 (f). In *Sweden* it is a common Thing to meet with People of above an hundred, and *Rudbekius* affirms, from Bills of Mortality, signed by his Brother, who was a Bishop, that in the small Extent of twelve Parishes, there died in the Space of thirty-seven Years, 232 Men, between 100 and 140 Years of Age (g); which is the more credible, since in the Diet, assembled by the late Queen of *Sweden*, in 1713, the boldest and best Speaker among the Deputies, from the Order of Peasants, was considerably above an hundred (h). These Accounts,

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(b) Barthol. Hist. Anat. Cent. v. Hist. 28. p. 46. (c) Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 29. (d) Memoir. de Paris, p. 197. (e) Buchan. Hist. Scot. (f) Hakewill's Apol. lib. iii. c. 1. p. 166. (g) Ol. Rudbek. Atlantic. p. 396. (h) Memoir. Histor. 1713. Tom. ii. p. 336.

however, are far short of what might be produced from *Africa*, and *North America*. But I confine myself to such Accounts, as are truly authentic, and I assemble these Instances, not to shew my own Learning, or to gratify my Reader's Curiosity, but with a View to satisfy him, that as the Fact is certain, Men may far transcend what are esteemed the common Bounds of Life, so this Blessing of Longevity is not confined to one Climate or Region, and therefore we need not despair of finding out the Art of prolonging Life, and keeping off the Decays of old Age in any Country.

It may be perhaps, notwithstanding all I have said, suggested, that in such a Case as this, which concerned Mankind in general so much, and in which every Man would naturally think himself so much interested, if the Thing were at all possible, this Art must have been long ago found out, especially, since in all Ages there have been a Race of Men, *viz.* Physicians, whose Business it particularly was, to study such Discoveries. To this I answer, that such Prejudices as these, are the greatest Bars to Science, that many useful Arts are but of very late Invention; and that if this was discovered heretofore, it might be concealed from Posterity for very many Reasons. But besides, the Fact is quite the contrary; this Art was avowedly studiously sought by the Antients, and some of them are said to have discovered it. *Asclepiades* the *Persian*, whom I have mentioned already, was wont to declare, he accounted a Physician ignorant of his Profession who could not defend himself from Diseases; and this Notion he supported by his own Example, having lived in the full Enjoyment of Health 150 Years, and was then unfortunately killed by a Fall down Stairs (*i*). *Mithridates*, King of *Pontus*, pretended also to this Secret, and so did many others. But the

(*i*) Sab. bel. lib. x. c. 3. p. 69.

the best Answer that can be given to all Scruples of this kind may be found in the following Passage from BACON, a famous *English* Monk, who lived in the 13th Century, who thus discourses on the Subject.

“ That it is possible to prolong Life, *says he*, may
 “ thus be made evident. By Nature Man is immortal, that is to say, was so formed originally, as that
 “ he might have escaped dying; and, even after he
 “ had sinn’d, he could live a thousand Years; in Pro-
 “ cess of Time, by little and little, the Length of his
 “ Life was abbreviated. Therefore it must needs be,
 “ that this Abbreviation is accidental, and may conse-
 “ quently be either wholly repair’d, or at least in Part.
 “ But if we would but make Enquiry into the acciden-
 “ tal Cause of this Corruption, we should find it nei-
 “ ther from Heaven, nor from ought but want of a Re-
 “ gimen of Health. For in as much as the Fathers are
 “ corrupt, they beget Children of a corrupt Complexion
 “ and Composition; and their Children, from the same
 “ Cause, are corrupt themselves, and so Corruption is
 “ derived from Father to Son, till Abbreviation of Life
 “ prevails by Succession. Yet for all this, it does not
 “ follow, that it shall always be cut shorter and shorter,
 “ because a Term is set in human Kind, that Men
 “ should at the most of their Years arrive at fourscore;
 “ but more is their Regimen, which consists in these
 “ Things, Meat and Drink, Sleep and Waking, Mo-
 “ tion and Rest, Evacuation and Retention, Air, and
 “ the Passions of the Mind. For if a Man would ob-
 “ serve this Regimen from his Nativity, he might live
 “ as long as his Nature assumed from his Parents would
 “ permit, and might be led to the utmost Term of Na-
 “ ture, lapsed from original Righteousness; which Term
 “ nevertheless he could not pass; because this Regi-
 “ men does not avail in the least against the old Cor-

ruption

“ rruption of our Parents. But it being in a Manner
 “ impossible, that a Man should be so governed in the
 “ Mediocrity of these Things, as this Regimen of Health
 “ requires, it must of Necessity be, that Abbreviation
 “ of Life come from this Cause, and not only from the
 “ Corruption of our Parents.

“ Now the Art of Physick determines this Regimen
 “ sufficiently. But neither rich nor poor, wise Men
 “ nor Fools, nor Physicians themselves, how skillful
 “ soever, are able to perfect this Regimen, either in
 “ themselves, or others, as is clear to every Man. But
 “ Nature is not deficient in Necessaries, nor is Art
 “ compleat; yea, it is able to resist and break through
 “ all accidental Passions, so as they may be destroyed,
 “ either altogether, or in Part. And in the Beginning,
 “ when Mens Age began to decline, the Remedy had
 “ been easy; but now, after more than five thousand
 “ Years, it is difficult to appoint a Remedy.

“ Nevertheless, wise Men, being moved with the a-
 “ foresaid Considerations, have endeavoured to think
 “ of some Ways, not only against the Defect of every
 “ Man's proper Regimen, but against the Corruption
 “ of our Parents. Not that a Man can be preserved to
 “ the Life of *Adam*, or *Artepheus*, because of prevail-
 “ ing Corruption: But, that Life may be prolonged a
 “ Century of Years, or more, beyond the common Age
 “ of Men now living, in that the Infirmities of old
 “ Age might be retarded; and if they could not altoge-
 “ ther be hindered, they might be mitigated, that Life
 “ might usefully be prolonged, yet always on this Side,
 “ the utmost Term of Nature. For the utmost Term
 “ of Nature is, that which was placed in the first Man
 “ after Sin, and there is another Term from the Cor-
 “ ruption of every one's own Parents.

“ It is no Man’s Lot to pass beyond both these Terms,
 “ but one may very possibly overcome the Term of
 “ his proper Corruption. Nor yet do I believe that a-
 “ ny Man, how wise soever, can attain the first Term,
 “ though there be the same Possibility and Aptitude of
 “ human Nature to that Term which was in the first Man.
 “ Nor is it a Wonder, since this Aptitude extends itself
 “ to Immortality, as it was before Sin, and will be after
 “ the Resurrection. But if you say, that neither *Ari-*
 “ *stotle*, nor *Plato*, nor *Hippocrates*, nor *Galen*, arrived at
 “ such Prolongation : I answer you, nor at many mean
 “ Truths, which were after known to other Students;
 “ and therefore they might be ignorant of these great
 “ Things, although they made their Attempt. But
 “ they busied themselves too much in other Things,
 “ and they were quickly brought to old Age, while
 “ they spent their Lives in worse and common Things,
 “ before they perceived the Ways to the greatest of Se-
 “ crets. For we know that *Aristotle* saith in his Predi-
 “ caments, that the Quadrature of the Circle is possible,
 “ but not then known. And he confesses, that all Men
 “ were ignorant of it even to his Time. But we know,
 “ that, in these our Days, this Truth is known ; and
 “ therefore, well might *Aristotle* be ignorant of far
 “ deeper Secrets of Nature. Now also, wise Men are
 “ ignorant of many Things, which in Time to come,
 “ every common Student shall know. Therefore, this
 “ Objection is every Way vain (k).”

Such were the Sentiments of this very great and
 very knowing Man, in Times of the deepest Igno-
 rance and darkest Obscurity ; and so thoroughly was he
 fixed in these Notions, and had attained so many Lights
 from the Study of the *Arabian* Writers, or rather of the
Greek Physicians Labours, digested into the Language

(k) Roger. Bacon. de vigore Artis et Naturae.

of that Nation, that he afterwards wrote an express Treatise on this Subject (*1*), of which I shall have frequent Occasion to speak, and therein suggested many admirable Precautions for the Preservation of Life, and avoiding the Infirmities of old Age. It is then certain, at least, that we are not pursuing a Shadow, or engaged in a close Search after an empty Chimera; there may be such a Thing as the Art we would reach, and it is not impossible, that the Methods suggested to us by the *Roman* Inscription may be the great Secret. In order to discern the Truth of this, or to speak more correctly, in order to discover how much of Truth there is in it, we ought first of all to examine carefully the Nature of human Breath, what Force it has, and what mighty Feats may be expected from it, since the Inscription tells us, the long-lived *Hermippus* owed his Vivacity to the Nourishment he received from the Breath of Girls, or, if we take in the various Readings of the Inscription, to the Breath of young People of both Sexes.

In order to come to a thorough Knowledge of this Matter, we must consider first what the Breath is, and we shall soon learn, that as Man lives by Breath, so that Breath is nothing more than Air drawn in, and after passing through the Lungs, thrown off again, that we may draw in fresh. I do not tie myself here to physical Terms, or affect a technical Manner of speaking; the Subject on which I write is of general Concern, and I would therefore express myself in a Language that may be generally understood. This Air, when received into our Bodies, according to some Physicians, nourishes the Lamp of Life; but according to all, causes the Circulation of the Blood, and other Juices upon which Health and Life depend. On the other Side, the Air that we respire, and which we commonly call the

(*1*) Roger. *Facon de Prolongatione Vitae*, &c.

Breath,

Breath, must, by passing thro' the Lungs, be strongly tinctured with the Particles of that Body through which it has passed, and when it mixes again with the Atmosphere, must communicate certain Qualities which the Air had not before. This is so reasonable, and at the same time so self evident, that I think it cannot be denied. From hence it follows, that where there are many People in one Room, the Air that is common to them all, must be strongly impregnated with their Breaths. If therefore an old Man be for many Hours surrounded with young People, we cannot help perceiving, that he must take in a great Quantity of that Air which they have respired, and which consequently must be loaded with those Particles which it carried off in passing through their Lungs.

To judge the better of this Matter, let us consider first the Action of Odours in general upon the human Body; and with regard to this, a very cautious Writer, the *Hippocrates* of our Age, and who will be esteemed the Father of modern Physic by Posterity, after having explained wherein the Odour of Plants consists, and how exhaled, he then discourses thus. “ Hence we may understand, “ that the various, peculiar, and often surprizing Virtue “ of Plants, may be widely diffused though the Air, and “ carried to a vast Distance by the Winds, so that we “ must not presently account as Fables, what we find related in the History of Plants, concerning the surprizing Effects of Effluvia. The Shade of the Walnut “ gives the Head-ach, and makes the Body costive. “ The Effluvia of the Poppy procure Sleep. The Vapour of the Yew is reputed mortal to those who sleep “ under it; and the Smell of Bean Blossoms, if long “ continued, disorders the Senses. The strong Action “ of the Sun upon Plants, certainly raises Atmospheres “ of great Efficacy, by Means of the Spirits it diffuses; “ and

“ and the Motions of the Winds carry them to a Distance. The dark Shades of thick Woods, where Vapours are contracted, occasion various Diseases, and often Death to those who reside among them, as appears by melancholy Examples in *America*, which abounds with poisonous Trees. For this Spirit of Plants, is a Thing peculiar to each Species, absolutely inimitable, not producible by Art. It has, therefore, Virtues peculiar to itself, but such as are strangely agreeable to the human Spirits (*m*).”

If the Smell of Vegetables have such high Effects, much stronger surely may be expected from animal Odours; and as to the Effects of human Breath, we know from Experience that they are very extraordinary. It is generally thought, that in the Case of epidemic Diseases, the Infection is propagated by the Breath (*n*), and it is said to have been the Practice of wicked Nurses in the Time of the Plague, to catch the dying Breath of their departing Patients in Lawn Handkerchiefs, for the very worst of Practices; and if human Breath when fetid and corrupt, is so potent, why should we conceive it void of Efficacy, when Persons are in a freest State of Health? Every Body knows how grateful and refreshing we discern the Breath of Cows to be, which is thence supposed exceedingly wholesome; and as the Fragrance of young Peoples Breath, who are brought up under a proper Regimen, falls little short of this, one may very reasonably suppose. that it partakes of the same Virtues.

Now to apply these Principles to the Matter at present under our Examination. It is, I think, allowed by such as are best acquainted with the Secrets of Nature, that there is a very brisk and lively Motion in the

(*m*) Boerhaave *Elementa Chæmiæ*. (*n*) Hodges *de Peste*. Prosper Alpin *Hist. Natural. Ægypt*.

Blood of young People; to which, according to the Laws of Animal Oeconomy, Health, Vigour, and Growth, are attributed. On the other Hand, a Decay of this lively Motion, and in Consequence thereof, a sluggish Circulation, which by Degrees ceases altogether in the finest and smallest Vessels, is held to be the principal Cause of the Stiffness in the Muscles, which creates that Weariness and Want of Force, that is the great Incommodity of old Age. There seems therefore to be nothing forced or absurd, in conceiving that the warm, active, and balsamick Particles thrown off by the Lungs of young People into the Air which they respire, may give it such a Quality, as when sucked in again by a Person in Years, shall communicate an extraordinary Force to the circulating Humours in his Body, and so quicken and enliven them, as to bestow a Kind of reflective Youthfulness, which may for many Years keep off and delay those Infirmities, to which People of the same Age are generally subject. The more we consider this Doctrine, the greater Care we take in comparing Causes and Effects of the like Nature, and the closer we attend to such Experiments as seem fittest for the clearing up of this Matter, the more we shall be satisfied of the Truth of this Conjecture, and the more credible this Invention of *Hermippus* will appear.

I am very sensible, that there are many vain, ill grounded, and fantastical Notions that prevail among idle People, in relation to the Breath; some have fancied that Sorcerers have a Power of fascinating therewith such as they breathe upon, and therefore, in many of the Books which treat of Witchcraft, this is usually thrown in as a Circumstance; neither is it a new, but an (o) old Piece of Superstition, which has subsisted in the World many hundred Years before the late Affair in

France,

(o) *Pfellus de dæmon.*

France, where *Mifs Cadiere* attributes her Possession to the Breath of the Priest (*p*). We are likewise told of Nations in the *Indies*, who cure all Diseases by breathing on such as are affected with them; but this ought to be no more regarded than what we meet with in *Pliny*, of another *Indian* Nation, who lived towards the Sources of the *Ganges*, who have no Mouths, and who are nourished by sweet Savours (*q*). These are either absolute Fictions, or allegorical Accounts; which at this Distance of Time, and perhaps when *Pliny* himself wrote them, were not understood. He gathered most of his Facts from the *Greek* Writers, and they frequently disguised, as they sometimes falsified their Narrations. But these Fictions, which every body can discern, ought not to prejudice Matters of Fact, of the Truth of which any Enquirer may be satisfied.

There are in *Spain* a Race of People, or as some Writers say, an Order of Knighthood, stiled *Salutadores*, who pretend to cure Wounds by breathing on the Patient, and repeating certain Prayers, which they affirm were taught by *St. Elmo* (*r*). The Church of *Rome* has condemned this fanatical Practice, and so do I; but there is another somewhat related to this, which, whether Nature or Chance first introduced into the World, is uncertain, but which is not like ever to wear out; and that is, breathing on People in a Swoon, in order to bring them to themselves, which is found to be very effectual, as from natural Causes might well be expected. Let us then in all Cases of this Nature distinguish between Reason and Report, vulgar Opinion and the

(*p*) See the several Factums in that famous Cause, in which this Business of fascinating by the Breath is largely treated. (*q*) *Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 2. Cæ. Rhod. Antiq. Lect. lib. xiv. c. 21.* The Name given to this Nation by these Authors, is the *Atromes*: (*r*) *Delrio Magic. Disquisit. y. ii. p. 114.*

Sense of capable Judges, the Practices of Mountebanks and Deceivers and Deductions from physical Principles by Men of Learning and sound Sense. I do not however deny, that popular Remedies have found Admittance into Physic, and ought there to be retained; for in Physic, as well as in Chemistry, the Effects of Medicines are considered as Experiments, upon which wise Men reason, and assign the Uses, though there might be another Sort of People who first found them out; it is one Thing to prescribe rationally, and another to be lucky in Cures. *Hoffman* and *Boerhaave* are the most different People in the World from *Paracelsus* and *Van Helmont*, who yet were very extraordinary Men in their Way.

I do not imagine that *Hermippus* by reasoning found out this Remedy against old Age; I am inclined rather to think it found out him, that is to say, by vigorous Effects he was led to the Cause, and by feeling himself revived by this Medicine, taught the Knowledge and Efficacy of it. If one was disposed to pursue the Method of the Antients, and to dress up this Story in the Garb which *Plato* would have given it, one might relate it thus.

When the blooming *Thysbe*, whom the Graces adorn, and the Muses instruct, converses with the good old *Hermippus*, her Youth invigorates his Age, and the brisk Flame that warms her Heart, communicates its Heat to his: So often as the lovely Virgin breathes, the kindly Vapours fly off full of the lively Spirits that swim in her Purple Veins; these old *Hermippus* greedily drinks in; and as Spirits quickly attract Spirits, so they are presently mingled with the Blood of the old Man. Thus the Vapour, which but a Moment before was expelled by the brisk beating of the Heart of *Thysbe*, is communicated by the *Æther* to *Hermippus*, and passing through
his

his Heart; serves to invigorate his Blood, so that almost without a Metaphor, we may say, the Spirits of *Thysbe* give Life to *Hermippus*. For what is there more easy to apprehend, than that the active Spirits of this brisk and blooming Maid, should, when received from the Air, thaw the frozen Juices of her aged Friend, and thereby give them a new Force, and a freer Passage; and thus *Hermippus* possessing at once the Strength his Nature retains, and borrowing fresh Spirits from the lovely *Thysbe*, what Wonder that he, who enjoys two Sorts of Life, should live twice as long as another Man?

Such had been its Appearance, if we had derived this Fact from a *Grecian* Sage, and then perhaps, it had been honoured with numerous Commentaries, and laboured Explications. But the *Romans* were a graver People, they contented themselves with delivering Truth in the Language of Truth, and thought, that like all great Beauties, she looked best in a plain Dress.

History informs us, that very many who spend their Time in the Instruction, and of consequence in the Company of Youth, have lived to great Ages; thus *Gorgias*, the Master of *Isocrates*, and many other eminent Persons, lived to be 108; the Year before his Death somebody demanded in his School, how he had been able to support so long the tedious Burden of old Age; the Sophist replied, That he regreted nothing he had done, and felt nothing of which he could reasonably complain: My Youth, said he, cannot accuse me, nor can I accuse my old Age (s). His Scholar *Isocrates*, in the 94th Year of his Age, published a Book, and survived that Publication four Years, in all which Time he betrayed not the least Failure, either in Memory or in Judgment; but as he had long lived, so he

(s) *Phn. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 48. Valer. Max. lib. viii. c. 13.*

died with the Reputation of being the most eloquent Man in Greece (t). *Xenophilus*, an eminent *Pythagorean* Philosopher, taught a numerous Train of Students, till he arrived at the Age of 105, and even then enjoyed a very perfect Health, and yet he left this World before his Abilities left him (u). *Nicholas Leoniceus* read the Physic Lectures at *Ferrara*, in the last Age, upwards of 70 Years; and *Languis* tells us, that when he heard him, he was somewhat above 96, and to a Person who asked him, by what Rule he had acquired this green old Age, he answered, by delivering up my Youth chaff to my Man's Estate (w). *Platerus* tells us, That his Grandfather who exercised the Office of a *Præceptor* to some young Noblemen, married a Woman of thirty, when he was in the hundred Year of his Age. His Son by this Marriage did not stay like his Father, but took him a Wife when he was twenty; the old Man was in full Health and Spirits at the Wedding, and lived six Years afterwards (x). These are Instances very surprising, and seem to argue, that the Company of young People is a great Preservative against old Age.

The celebrated *Lewis Cornaro*, so well known to the World by his elaborate Treatises on the Benefits of a sober Life, amongst other Things that he relates of himself, tells us this, That when he first began his Regimen, he took home eleven little Nephews, all Sons of the same Father and Mother, all fine healthy Children, whom he took the Pains to educate himself; adding, that whenever he came from the Senate, he diverted himself with the innocent Mirth, harmless Sports, and inoffensive Tattle of the Youngsters. Some of the elder of them, says he, entertained me more agreeably. They under-

(t) Plutarch in vit. Isocrat. (u) Plin. Histor. Natural. lib. vii. c. 50. Valer. Max. ubi supra. (w) Melch. Adam. in vit. Germ. Med. p. 41. (x) Plateri Observat. lib. i. p. 233, 234.

stand Music, often play upon the Lute, accompany it with their Voices, and I too, adds he, frequently join my own, which is as clear, as strong, and as sweet as ever it was. I have likewise, says he, composed a very diverting Comedy, the Scenes of which are diversified with an inoffensive Variety of Wit and Humour, that has in it an agreeable Turn of Thought, and Quaintness of Expression. Comedy, you know, is generally the Child of Youth, as Tragedy is the Product of old Age. The latter, on Account of its Gravity and Seriousness, besitting more mature Years; whilst the former, by its Gaiety of Wit and Humour, is more agreeable to Youth. Now, if an Ancient *Greek* Poet, though he was ten Years younger than myself, was admired and celebrated for his having wrote a Tragedy, why should I be esteemed less happy, or less myself, who have composed and published a Comedy? When I am confident, the same Poet, tho' he was ten Years younger than I am, yet had not a better Share of Health, or a livelier Imagination (y). I make Use of the Authors own Words, because *Cornaro* must, of all others, have best known himself, and the very Spirit he shews in reciting these Things, is a most evident Proof of the Strength, Vigour, and Youthfulness of his Constitution. I will, however, mention another more modern Instance.

Francis Secardi Hongo, usually distinguished by the Name of *Huppazoli*, was Consul for the State of *Venice* in the Island of *Scio*, where he died, in the Beginning of 1702, when he was very near 115. This Man was a Native of *Casal*, in the *Montferrat*. He married in *Scio*, when he was young, and being much addicted to the Fair-Sex, he had in all five Wives, and fifteen or twenty Concubines, all of them young, beautiful Women, by whom he had Forty-nine Sons and Daughters, whom

(y) See *Cornaro's Benefits of a sober Life*, p. 33.

he educated with the utmost Tenderness, and was constantly with them, as much as his Business would permit.

He was never sick, his Sight, Hearing, Memory, and Activity were amazing; he walked every Day about eight Miles; his Hair, which was long and graceful, became white by that Time he was Four-score, but turned black at an Hundred, as did his Eyebrows and Beard at One hundred and Twelve. At One hundred and Ten he lost all his Teeth; but the Year before he died, he cut two large ones with great Pain. His Food was generally a few Spoonfuls of Broth, after which he eat some little Thing roasted; his Breakfast and Supper, Bread and Fruit; his constant Drink, distilled Water, without any Addition of Wine, or other strong Liquor, to the very last. He was a Man of strict Honour, of great Abilities, of a free, pleasant, and sprightly Temper, as we are told by many Travellers, who were all struck with the good Sense, and good Humour of this polite old Man (z). The Reader will easily discern, that the Point, upon which I chiefly insist is, his having continually young Company about him, especially young Women; for though neither himself, nor, for ought I know, any Body else, ever remarked that this might contribute to the lengthening his Life, yet so the Fact might be, though unnoticed. It is indeed more for my Purpose to collect Accounts like these, where there is clear Evidence of the Fact I would establish, before the Principle, to which I refer, was it ever thought of, than to quote Instances of a fresher Date, since the Thing might have been in my Head. These are Instances that cannot be warp'd; I have cautiously cited my Authors, and sometimes the Words of the People themselves, so that I need not ask where I can force Belief.

(z) Voyages de Tournefort, &c.

I will suppose then of our *Hermippus*, that he was a Tutor or Director of a College of Virgins; for since the Inscription tells us not what he was, we may be allowed all the Freedom of a rational Conjecture. This College of Virgins I conceive to be founded purely for the Sake of Education, and thereby affording a quick and constant Succession of little Maids, from the Age of between five and six, to thirteen and fourteen. I imagine it might be requisite for the Health, as well as proper Instruction of these young Ladies, that they rose pretty early in the Morning, and this in all Seasons of the Year. In the Spring and Summer they might be allowed to walk and enjoy the refreshing Pleasure of rural Prospects, but always in the Company of their Director, who should be obliged to entertain them, during the Walk, with seasonable and lively Stories. If this seeming extraordinary Mode of Education, disgust Persons of a nice and prudish Taste, give me Leave to observe, that the *Greeks* used it of old, and that it is still practised by all the *Eastern Nations*. *Milesian*, or *Arabian* Tales, in which a Vivacity of Imagination appears, with here and there a Ray of sound Judgment, suit best with tender Minds, and especially with feminine Understandings. Women are remarkably governed by Example, or, to make use of a modern Phrase, by the Fashion. Why, therefore, should they not be instructed by Example? There is less Difference than most People imagine between real and feigned Stories. They differ but as morning and evening Shadows, the one is the faint Picture of what has passed, the other as lively a Representation of what may possibly come. In all other Respects they are alike; the Story of *Alexander* and *Roxana* is now as much a Dream as any in the *Persian* Tales. One Advantage that ideal Relations have over Stories grounded on Facts, is, that we may contrive them so as to avoid

void improper Circumstances, which cannot frequently be done with respect to the latter; but at the Expence of Truth. With such Discourses, after their early Devotions were over, the fair Pupils might be entertained in Winter Mornings, and the Day be thus opened with a free, chearful, and kindly Spirit, alike agreeable to his lovely Wards, and grateful to the good old Man.

After this morning Exercise, I suppose that *Hermippus*, and his Female Pupils, retire in order to bathe, to dress, and to adorn themselves, all which I look upon as no less necessary for the old Man, than fit and convenient for the young Women. Every Body knows, that the Antients were remarkably fond of Baths, and of Unctions, especially for old Men; and the *Arabian* Physicians prescribe then once in a Week or ten Days, and order some hot and well spiced Meat to be eaten after using them; but to be sure washing, cleansing, and keeping the Body neat, as they tend to make old Men pleasant and agreeable to such as converse with them, so they contribute not a little to their own Ease, and to the preserving that Suppleness in the Limbs, which is frequently attacked by old Age. On the other Hand, Elegancy in Dress, and great Niceness about their Bodies, is of very great Consequence to the Preservation of such a Temper in these young Maids as is fit to make them useful in that Way of which we are speaking. About Noon, after all this Exercise is quite over, I suppose *Hermippus* meets his Maidens with as much Chearfulness, as his Constitution will admit, while they receive him with that Sprightliness that is natural to theirs. A short Conversation should precede a light, well-chosen and wholesome Entertainment, of which all feeding freely, but not to Fulness, season the necessary Business of recruiting the Body with such ingenious and diverting Stories, as may amuse and recreate the Mind. After the

-Repast,

Repast, Music, vocal and instrumental, and then a Walk, or, if the Weather will not permit it, some breathing Exercise within Doors, to such a Degree as may excite Colour, but without forcing a Sweat.

The Evening should among such Company be chiefly dedicated to Diversion, the Ladies, and especially the youngest, should be indulged in all the little innocent Pastimes that contribute either to the Exercise of their Limbs, or the Improvements of their Wits, and these ought to take their Turns, according to the Rule prescribed by their Director. For Instance, after Blind-man's Buff, Hoop and Hide, or hunting the Hare, there should succeed Questions and Commands, Pictures and Motto's, Riddles, or something of the like Sort; and last of all, two or three of the Eldest might gently lead them by a few grave Stories into a fit Disposition for their Evening Devotions; after which, they might retire to their Dormitory, each having her proper Cell, but all open at the Top, as also the Director's Apartment, at the upper End. In a College like this, with such Company, and under such Regulations, where all the Pupils are chaste as *Diana's* Nymphs, fresh as the Spring, sweet as the Summer, and harmless as the Winter, ever full of Life and Spirits, free from Diseases, Cares or Distractions of Mind, easy in their Tempers, affable in their Manners, fond of obliging, grateful when obliged; I can scarce imagine that any Man could spend his Time more agreeably than *Hermippus*, live freer from a sense of Sorrow, or more remote from the Shadow of Death. By this Regimen he might be provided with an almost continual Refreshment of their odoriferous Breaths, and never lose their Company, but at Seasons proper for them and for him. His Blood would not only receive constant Supplies of Spirits from the artificial Atmosphere, constituted by this Contrivance, but his
Genius

Genius also would be kept brisk and lively, by a perpetual Intercourse with Persons in the most active Period of Life. Secluded in such a Retreat, from all the Hurry, all the Disorder, all the Accidents that attend a Life of Business, he would easily escape Disquiet and Fatigue, removed from all the Views of Profit, Pomp and Pleasure; he would never feel the cruel Disturbance of any restless Passion, the Desire of getting would never torment him, he would never be perplexed with the Fears of losing, if his Heart was at any Time touched with Pain, it must be at the parting with a Scholar, and even this would admit of some Relief, from the Pleasure afforded him by receiving a new Disciple. At least, these are the Comforts I have figured to myself, and such of my Readers, as are blessed with more vigorous Fancies, may conceive him in Possession of still higher and more exquisite Blessings.

I am sensible it may be objected, that the whole of this Supposition is absolutely arbitrary, that amongst the *Romans*, there never was any such College (a) as this, under the Direction of any Man, nor, for ought appears, in any other Nation. But then it is to be considered, that I have so stated it: If *Hermippus* was really nourished by the Breath of Women, as I have already shewn it is very reasonable to believe he might, then we must conceive to ourselves some Occupation, some Way of Life in which he might easily, and constantly receive this comfortable Medecine; and if the Account I have given be so far probable in itself, and free from Absurdity, as to convey clearly to the Reader's Mind such an Idea as I would willingly have it, it is not at all material, whether there ever was such a College, for that

(a) Except it may be the *Puellæ Faustiniæ*, of whom we find some Mention made in the antient Inscriptions.

that comes not at all within my Assertion, it is sufficient for my Purpose, if such a College there might have been. Another Reader may, perhaps, devise some easier, clearer, and more probable Method of interpreting this Inscription, if he does, I shall not dispute with, or envy him the Fertility of his Invention. My Account of the Matter serves to help the Notion I have formed of the Possibility of the Thing, and therefore as a Mathematician draws his Figures in order to explain the Propositions he lays down, so I have exhibited this Example, to illustrate the Doctrine that I would recommend.

One may likewise suggest, that most of the Examples hitherto alleged of the long Life of such as have taught young People, do not reach the Point I have advanced, in as much as they all confessedly belong to young Men. Yet, if this Objection affects what I have delivered, the Credit of the Inscription remains still untouch'd, since some understand it of Boys, though I incline to interpret it of Girls, for Reasons that will hereafter occur. But whoever makes this Objection, must admit, at the Time of making it, that there is an extraordinary Efficacy in the Breath of young Men, which duly considered, will be found a very great Concession in my Favour; since, if there be any such Efficacy in the Breath of young Men, no Reason can be assigned why my Supposition should be held less reasonable. All Things, therefore, that make in general in Favour of human Breath, or in Favour of the Breath of young People, tend to strengthen and support what I have laid down. As to those particular Circumstances which render female Breath preferable, it lies upon me to assign them, and this I shall do in its proper Place; in the mean time give me leave to remark one Thing more in Favour of my fictitious History of the College of Vigin, *viz.* That the greatest Men have thought it allowable to introduce such Descriptions

scriptions wherever they have judged them requisite, or agreeable to the Subject of which they were treating. The learned Sir *Thomas More* laid down a System of Politics in his *Utopia* (b). *Barclay* has written an ingenious History in his *Argenis*, and the great Chancellor *Bacon* has exhibited the most beautifull of all Fictions in his History of the *New Atlantis* (c), which History, if I mistake not, gave Birth to the Royal Society in *England*.

But I must not conceal two other Objections of far greater Weight, that have been made to this Doctrine of mine, by the ingenious Mr. *Nunning* (d). If, says that learned Person, your System be founded in Truth, if there be really any such Vigour and Efficacy in the Breath of Women, or even of young Women, how comes it to pass, that those Men have not attained to any extraordinary Age, who are known to have had the greatest Ad-

(b) There are some Disputes about the first Edition of this Book; The famous Mr. *Maittaire* fancies, there was one in the Year 1516; but he is mistaken, the first Edition of it bore the following Title. *De optimo Reipublicæ statu; deque nova insula Utopia Thomæ More libro duo, quibus præfiguntur Epistolæ Desiderii Erasmi, Gul. Budæi, Petri Egidii, ac in fine adjuncta Hieron. Buslidii Epistola. Basileæ. Joan. Froben. 1518. in 4^o.* and has been printed very often since. It was translated into English by *Ralph Robinson*, in 1537, which Translation *Bishop Burnet* mistook for the Author's own; however, he ventured to make another Translation in 1683, and a very good one it is. It was translated into Italian in 1548, but the Author of that Version is not known. There have been three Translations in French, of which that by *Sorbire* is esteemed the best. (c) The Author is right enough in his Observation, *Abraham Cowley* borrowed his Notion of a Philosophic College from *Lord Bacon's Atlantis*, and from Mr. *Cowley's* Notion of such a College the Royal Society had its Beginning. (d) This Gentleman is *Cannon of Verdun*, and is now publishing, in Germany, in Quarto, a Work, entituled *Monumenta Monasteriensia*, which is to contain, the Elogies of all the great Men who have been Natives of the *Bishoprick of Munster*.

vantages

vantages possible in this Way? Upon this he puts two, Questions, Why, says he, did not *Solomon*, whose Wives and Concubines were so numerous, and who undoubtedly were young, beautiful, and kept entirely from other Men; Why did not this *Solomon*, continues he, live beyond the ordinary Age of Man; whereas, the Scripture tells us, that he did not reach that which is common in our Times? This is the first Objection, and it must be owned, that Mr. *Nunning* has put it very modestly; for *Solomon* had, beside this, many other Advantages. He was undoubtedly a great Philosopher, an excellent Naturalist, and understood perfectly the Art of conducting Life, to which we may add, that some have believed him an exquisite Anatomist, Physician and Chymist; so that if he died before Seventy, who was possessed of such extensive Power, such immense Riches, and such Wisdom as never centred in another Man, What Reason is there to suppose, that such, as are infinitely below him in all Respects, should acquire the Knowledge of that which was indubitably hid from him? This is the Case stated fairly, freely, and fully; for we mean not to cheat or deceive our Readers, but to inform and satisfy them; our Endeavour is not to give an Air of Veracity to our own Opinion, but to rectify our own Notions by the Standard of Truth.

Mr. *Nunning's* second Objection is fetched from the Seraglio's of the *Turkish* Monarchs. Why, says he, do not the great Lords of the *Ottoman* Empire, who have such Numbers of young and fine Women, always in their Power, live to a great Age? Or rather, Why, since they have this Balsam of Life continually in their Possession, are they shorter-lived than other Men? and that too, in a Country where there are more long-lived People than in many others? This excellent Person might have fortified also this Objection, by extending it to the *Shahs* of *Persia*, the *Hans* of *Tartary*, the great *Moguls*, and all

all the other *Eastern* Princes, who, in this Respect, enjoy to the full the same Advantages with the *Turkish* Sultans. I am not afraid of giving the utmost Weight to these Suggestions, because, if I can fairly and clearly refute them, my Doctrine must appear, if not absolutely certain, much more probable at least, and much more agreeable to Truth, than if these Objections had never been mentioned. I do indeed admit, that both are very plausible, both seem directly destructive of my System; but if, notwithstanding all this, I am, as I think I am, in a Capacity of shewing that they do not at all affect what I have advanced, but that on the contrary when duly considered, they fortify it extremely, then, I hope, the Reader will attend with the greater Satisfaction, to some additional Arguments that I shall offer in support of this Notion. It is the great Beauty of Truth, that the more we examine it, the more different Lights in which we place it, the more Pains we take in turning and twisting it, the more we perceive its Excellency, and the better the Mind is satisfied about it; whereas Falshood, however fair it may appear, when dress'd out to Advantage, or set in a false Light, yet it never can stand the Test of a strict and unbiassed Enquiry.

The History of *Solomon* is very largely recorded in the sacred Writings; and the Circumstances therein laid down, enable us to give such an Account of the Manner of that Prince's Life, that we need be under no Sort of Surprize at the Earliness of his Death. He was, it is true, the wisest Man that ever lived, of which he has left us very noble Testimonies in his Writings. He was a great Politician, excellently skilled in the Arts, and a perfect Master of the polite Literature of those Times; but with all this, we see that he was a very voluptuous Man. Science and Pleasure engrossed him by turns; he would have pushed his Researches beyond the Bounds of human Nature; and when he

found himself checked, then he began to complain of the Burthen of Knowledge, and the Tirefomeness of such Enquiries. To deliver himself from these Anxieties, to calm his Cares, to drown his Doubts, and bury his Apprehensions in Oblivion, he had recourse to sensual Delights, having constantly in his Seraglio a Multitude of fine Women, amounting, as the Author of the Book of *Kings* tells us, to Seven hundred Wives, who were Princesses, and Three hundred Concubines (e). With these, he led an effeminate, lascivious, and profligate Life. These Women were of all Nations, *Egyptians, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Zidonians, and Hittites*, and each endeavoured to recommend herself to his Favour, by all the studied Arts of Luxury (f). Amongst such a heterogeneous Mass of Females, all corrupt in their Morals, all different in their Customs, all filled with Jealousy and Emulation of each other, what Reason was there to hope either for Quiet, or for Health?

In the Description we have given of the Life of *Hermippus*, we have used our utmost Endeavour, to shew the Means by which this sovereign Medicine, we are discouraging of, operates, and how it is to be employed. We suppose our old Man to be of a gentle, uniform, and pleasant Disposition, always easie, always content, and surrounded by Numbers of blooming Virgins, too young to have either their Bodies, or their Thoughts tainted; and we suppose these Persons spending their Time together, in chaste and innocent Amusements. But the Life of *Solomon* was the very reverse of this, his Thoughts were in a perpetual Hurry, his Mind in constant Agitation; one Day deeply plunged in Philosophical and Metaphysical Contemplations; the next sunk in sceptical Doubts, and gloomy Reflections; the third giving a loose to his Pleasures, and abandoning himself

(e) 1 Kings, xi. 3. (f) Ibid. v. 1.

without

without Restraint, not only to the Lewdness of his own Desires, but to the wilder Extravagancies of a Multitude of vicious Women. All this we learn, not only from Histories of indubitable Authority, but from his own Writings; there we see the Struggles of his Heart; there we see his restless Love of Pleasure; his intemperate Thrift after Knowledge, and in Consequence thereof his Agonies and Disquiet. Is there any Likeness between these two Characters? Can one imagine, that the Conversation of Women in such a Diversity of Circumstances, should have the same Effect on *Solomon* and *Hermippus*? Or can it enter into the Head of any Man, blessed with a sound Understanding, that this, or any other Medicine, could defend *Solomon* from old Age, considering the Course he held? Was there ever a Man that studied the Prolongation of Life with more Assiduity than *Solomon* laboured to shorten it? Did he not harass his Spirits with intricate and perplexed Enquiries? Did he not vex himself With perpetual Questions about present and future Felicity, which rendered it impossible for him to enjoy it? Did he not, by indulging his Passions, scatter the Seeds of Destruction? And did he not, by his Luxury and Intemperance, cherish and cultivate them, till they at last, as they always do, disturbed the Frame of his Mind, as well as ruined his Constitution? What wonder then that *Solomon* was no *Long-liver*?

What I have said, will, I dare say, satisfy the worthy Gentleman who proposed this Doubt, and every Reader who seriously considers it. The Objection takes *Solomon* for a Person in that very Situation wherein I would place *Hermippus*; but I have shewn this to be altogether groundless. The Objection takes it for granted, that I look upon the Breath of young Women to be an universal Medicine; whereas, I assert only, that the Breath of young Virgins, in a particular Way, may defend

send a Person against old Age, who, by Temperance and Moderation, defends himself against Diseases. But, besides what I have mentioned, I have yet something more to say as to *Solomon*, which I might have offered before, and which would have excused me from examining his Case at all, if I had inclined to have sheltered myself under any f ch Subterfuge.

All the Accounts we have of *Solomon*, suppose him to be under a particular Dispensation, and that he had Recourse immediately to God himself, at least twice in his Life, so that this Man was not in the same Situation with others, and therefore not fit to be considered as an Example. I might push this further still, by observing, that God was pleased to promise him Length of Days, if he imitated the Righteousness of his Father *David*; so that he had a much better Medicine in his Power, than human Wisdom could supply him with, and yet he knew not how to use it. The Scriptures say, *That when Solomon was old, his Wives turned away his Heart after other Gods (g)*. Oldness is here used in the Sense in which I understand it, that is, with respect to the Condition, and not to the Years of Life; for in that Sense, *Solomon* was not old when he died, since he exceeded not Sixty-seven. The plain Meaning therefore of this Text must be, that when his Vices had broken his Constitution, and weakened his Faculties, then these Women, to whom he gave himself up, drew him to Idolatry, and these Nurses of his second Childhood industriously taught him to fall. Drawn by their Delusions, he sacrificed both Titles to long Life, viz. that which Temperance gave him by the Law of Nature, and that which by an extraordinary Revelation he received from God himself. For this no doubt included that, since we cannot suppose that God promised

(g) Ibid. vi. 4.

long

long Life to *Solomon* without an implied Condition, that he attended to the natural Means for attaining it, the Laws and Promises of God must be always rational, because they are made and propounded to reasonable Creatures.

After examining this Objection so fully, it will cause me much less Trouble to clear up the other. For what can there be more contrary to, or irreconcilable with the Doctrine I have laid down, than the Lives led by *Eastern Monarchs*; all Writers agree, that to give Strength and Firmness to the Body, there is nothing so necessary as Chastity in green Years. The *Germans*, as *Tacitus* tells us, were won't to preserve themselves from Women, till they were thirty at least, and this he assigns as the principal Cause of their Robustness, Courage and long Life (*b*). Long before his Time, the *Spartans* had formed the same Notions, led thereto by Reason and Experience (*i*), but with regard to the *Asiatic Princes*, they never know what Purity of Manners and Chastity of Mind mean, they are corrupted in their Mother's Nurseries, and the dissolute Temper of the Father prevents the virtuous Education of the Son. While they are yet Striplings, they are permitted the Use of Women, in order to enervate their Minds, and when they grow up, an effeminate Luxury becomes the prime Business of their Lives. Amongst such Men as these, shall we look for Health or long Life? Is this agreeable to the Rules of Wisdom or Science, I mean, to the natural Dictates of good Sense, or to the Maxims of Physic? If not, where lyes the Strength of the Objection?

But besides all this, what if there be still a shorter, plainer, or more decisive Answer, which is, that we can never properly judge in this Case, because Experi-

(*b*) De Morib. German. (*i*) Plutarch. in Lacon.

ence teaches us, that these Princes seldom or never die a natural Death. In the Field they are exposed to the common Chances of War; and if we look into the *Turkish, Persian, or Indian* Stories, we shall find at least a third Part of their Monarchs have fallen in Battle. Again, consider them in their civil Capacity, and from the very Nature of an arbitrary despotic Government, you must be sensible that they are continually liable to popular Insurrections, in which many of their Princes have likewise fallen. But if you pursue them further, and follow them into the Recesses of their private Life, as you will perceive them to be no way happier, so you will find them much less safe than any of their Subjects. The Intrigues and Jealousies of their many Wives must always expose such Princes to a Multitude of Dangers, especially in Countries where Poisons are very common, and where the most dexterous Use of them is common too.

But what if the sacred History, which furnished the first and strongest Objection, contains another History, which is the fullest, clearest and most satisfactory Proof that can be offered in Favour of the Opinion I espouse? The Case I mean is that of King *David* in his old Age, which I shall state fully and fairly. It is said, that King *David* grew old and stricken in Years, his natural Heat decaying to such a degree, that no Addition of Cloaths could give him Heat; in this Distress, the Physicians advised him to the very Remedy which I recommend. Let there be sought, said they, for my Lord the King, a young Virgin, and let her stand before the King, and let her cherish him, and let her lie in his Bosom, that my Lord the King may get Heat. Accordingly *Abishag the Shunamite*, was brought to the King, and of her we read, that she was a Damself very fair, that she cherished the King, and ministred to him; but the King *knew her*

not (k). This is the Story, as it lies in the Book, and from hence I think it plainly appears, that the Physicians of those Times were well acquainted with the Efficacy of this Remedy, and understood how Age might be benefited by Youth.

The famous Monk *Roger Bacon*, whom I have cited before, in his Treatise of the Cure of old Age, has a large Chapter upon this Subject; though, as he wrote to a Pope, and in an Age noways favourable to him or his Discoveries, he thought proper to conceal what he admits to be the most efficacious Medicine it was in his Power to prescribe, under such dark and obscure Terms, that few I believe have reached his true Meaning. It may perhaps be suspected that I have deceived myself, and that having this Notion in my Head, I have found in *Bacon's* (l) Works Things that never were there; for which Reason, as well as because I can offer nothing more curious, or more pertinent of my own, I will cite as much of his Book, as relates to this Subject, and leave it to my Reader to decide, how far I do, or do not do him Justice by my Comment.

“ I have read many Volumes of the Wise, I find few
 “ Things in Physic which restore the natural Heat,
 “ weakened by Dissolution of the innate Moisture, or In-
 “ crease of a foreign one. But certain wise Men have
 “ tacitely made mention of some Medicines, which is like-
 “ ned to that which goes out of the Mine of the noble
 “ Animal, they affirm, that in it there is a Force and
 “ Virtue, which restores and encreases the natural Heat.
 “ As to its Disposition, they say, 'tis like Youth itself,
 “ and contains an equal and temperate Complexion; and
 “ the Signs of a temperate Complexion in Men are,

(k) 1. Kings, i. 1. See also the Commentaries of Munster, Grotius, &c. among the larger Critics, who all interpret these Passages of Scripture in this way. (l) R. Bacon. de Prolongatione Vitæ. c. xli.

when

" when their Colour is made up of White and Red, when
 " the Hair is yellow, inclining to Redness and Cur-
 " ling; according to *Pliny*, when the Flesh is mode-
 " rate, both in Quality and Quantity; when a Man's
 " Dreams are delightful; his Countenance chearful and
 " pleasant, and when in his Appetite of Eating and
 " Drinking he is moderate. This Medicine indeed is like
 " to such a Complexion; for 'tis of a moderate heat, its
 " Fume is temperate and sweet, and grateful to the Smell;
 " when it departs from this Temperature, it departs so
 " far from its Virtue and Goodness. This Medicine doth
 " therefore temperately heat because it is temperately hot,
 " it therefore heals because it is whole. When it is sick,
 " it makes a Man sick; when it is distempered, it breeds
 " Distempers, and changeth the Body to its own Dispo-
 " sition, because of the Similitude it hath with the Body.

" For the Infirmary of a brute Animal, rarely pass-
 " eth into Man, but into another Animal of the same
 " Kind. But the Infirmary of a Man passeth into
 " Man, and so doth Health because of Likeness. Know
 " most Gracious Prince, That in this, there is a great
 " Secret. For *Galen* saith, that whatever is dissolved
 " from any Thing, it must of necessity be assimilated
 " to that Thing, as is manifest in Diseases passing from
 " one to another; such as Weakness of the Eyes, and
 " Pestilential Diseases. This Thing hath an admirable
 " Property, for it doth not only render human Bodies
 " safe from Corruption, but it defends also the Bodies
 " of Plants from Putrefaction. This Thing is seldom
 " found, and although sometimes it be found, yet it
 " cannot commodiously be had of all Men: And in-
 " stead of it, the Wise do use that Medicine which is
 " in the Bowels of the Earth, complete and prepared,
 " and that which swims in the Sea, and that which is the
 " square Stone of the noble Animal; so that every Part
 may

" may be free from the Infection of another. But if
 " that Stone cannot be acquired, let other Elements
 " separated, divided, and purified be made use-of.

" Now when this Thing is like to Youth, that is of
 " temperate Complexion, it hath good Operations; if
 " its Temperature be better, it produceth better Effects;
 " sometimes it is even in the highest Degree of its Per-
 " fection, and then it operates best, and then there is
 " that Property whereof we have spoken before. This
 " differs from other Medicines and Nutriments, which
 " heat and moisten after a certain temperate Manner,
 " and are good for old Men. For other Medicines prin-
 " cipally heat and moisten the Body; and secondarily,
 " they strengthen the native Heat; but this doth prin-
 " cipally strengthen the native Heat, and after that, re-
 " freshes the Body by moistening and heating it. For it
 " reduces this Heat in old Men, who have it but weakly
 " and deficient, to a certain stronger and more vehement
 " Power. If a Plaister be made hereof, and applied
 " to the Stomach, it will help very much, for it will
 " refresh the Stomach itself, and excite an Appetite; it
 " will very highly recreate an old Man, and change him
 " to a Kind of Youth, and will make Complexions, by
 " what means soever depraved or corrupted, better.

" Many wise Men have spoken but little of this
 " Thing, they have indeed laid down another Thing
 " like it, as *Galen* in his fifth Book of simple Medicines,
 " and *Johannes Damascenus*, in his Aphorisms. But
 " it is to be observed that *Venus* doth weaken and de-
 " molish the Power and Virtue of this Thing; and it
 " is very likely that the Son of the Prince, in his second
 " Canon of simple Medicines, spoke of the Thing,
 " where he saith, that there is a certain Medicine com-
 " cealed by wise Men, lest the incontinent should of-
 " fend their Creator. There is such a Heat in this

• Thing

“ Thing as in young Men of a sound Complexion, and
 “ and if I durst declare the Properties of this Heat, this
 “ most hidden Secret should presently be revealed. For
 “ this Heat doth help the Pallid, it restores and pre-
 “ serves the wasted Strength of the native Heat, caus-
 “ eth it to flourish in all the Members, and gently re-
 “ vives the Aged.” These are precisely the Words of
 Fryar Bacon; the Thing now to be considered is, whe-
 ther we have rightly interpreted them, or whether
 they are capable of any juster, and more natural Sense,
 which, after a few Reflections on the Motives which have
 determined us, shall be left to the Reader’s Judgment.

Some have entertained an Opinion, that this myste-
 rious Preparation was no other than the Quintessence of
 human Blood; but whoever considers the Description of
 it in all its Parts, will easily discern, that it can be no
 such Thing, since the Odour or Scent of it is recom-
 mended on Account of its grateful Sweetness; besides,
 Quintessences are taken inwardly; whereas, he directs
 the Medicine to be applied as a Plaister to the Stomach;
 and indeed the other Marks agree with such a Quinte-
 ssence as ill as this. Others have believed, that
 our Author intended here to describe a Kind of preci-
 ous Stone, but such must be absolutely unacquainted
 with his Manner of Writing; for he is no affecter of
 Mysteries, in order to strike his Reader with Amazement,
 or to raise his own Reputation; both of these Things
 he justly contemned. His Obscurity proceeds from this,
 that at the Time he wrote, he was in Prison, for writing
 against the Philosophy that was then current, and he
 address’d this Book to Pope *Nicholas IV.* his Prosecutor;
 in order to obtain his Pardon; but being doubtful how
 far it would operate, he was very cautious in writing,
 that he might not afford Room for a second Accusation,
 of laying Things secret in their Nature open to vulgar
 Capacities.

Capacities. Now, if he was here describing a precious Stone, why should he talk so darkly? This certainly did not require so much Pains to be taken to hide it; and so far would such a dark Account have been from serving his Purpose, that it would have been visibly contrary to his Design, by leaving Room for extraordinary Conjectures, where, without the least Danger, he might have spoken out. Whereas, if our Interpretation be admitted, there was the utmost Reason for all this Caution; his Apology is perfectly reasonable, and all the Doubtings and Hesitations that are thrown in, appear so many modest Excuses, very artfully and very properly placed.

Let us consider this Description of *Bacon's*, and compare it with the Picture drawn by the Hand of a greater, and still more knowing Man, and we shall be apt to think that we hear *Solomon* describing the lovely *Shunamite*. Look upon *Bacon's* Words again, and imagine the thin Veil to be removed; you will then see the perfect Figure of this Damsel that was very fair; you will discern the Rose of *Sharon*, and the Lilly of *Damascus*; her Hair like Purple, in curling Locks; her two young Roes that are Twins, feeding among Lillies; her Head filled with the Dew, and her Locks with the Drops of the Night; her Countenance fair as the Moon, clear as the Sun; her Fruit sweet to the Taste, as she sits under the Shadow with great Delight; her Spikenard and chief Spices, while the South-wind blows upon her Garden, that the Spices thereof may blow; her Well of living Waters, and Streams of *Lebanon*; and here the fairest among Women is wounded by the Watchmen, and then her beloved departs.

This Commentary sufficiently explains the Text, but to put it beyond Doubt, and to apply all this effectually to my Subject, I shall touch gently on two or three remarkable

markable Passages. In the first Place, our Author says, that this Medicine is liken'd to that which goes out of the Mine of the noble Animal; and what can this Mine be but Woman, in whom, as in a Mine, the noble Animal is formed. Then again, our Author says, the Infirmary of a brute Animal rarely passes into Man, but into another Animal of the same Kind; but the Infirmary of a Man passes into Man, and so does Health, because of Likeness. Here he lays open a great Secret in Philosophy, *viz*, That there is a Sympathy in Health, as well as Contagion in Disease, and that as a morbid Breath infects, so a wholesome one may exhilarate. Taken in this Sense, nothing can be easier, plainer, or more rational, nor is there any other Sense the Words, literally taken, can bear. The last Passage I shall remark, when he observes, that *Venus* weakens and diminishes the Power and Virtue of this Remedy. How exactly does this agree with the pertinent Reflection of the Author of the Book of *Kings*, when repeating the Verses *David* made of *Abisbag*; he says, with a particular Emphasis, *but the King knew her not!* A young Virgin taken in this Manner, recalls Heat and Life into an old Man; but if forgetting that this is a temporary and artificial Vigour, he uses it as if it were a natural one; he may indeed give Life to another, but it will be at the expence of his own. When these Exploits are related to us as Marks of old Mens Vigour, we should set them down as Marks of their Folly too; for as *Solomon* says, *that there is a Time to be born, and a Time to die*; so Nature and true Philosophy teaches, that there is a Time to beget, and a Time to abstain from begetting.

I will take the Liberty also of drawing some Advantage even from the second Objection, since, with respect to *Eastern Princes*, though it be true that most of them die early, yet it is no less true, that where they do

do not die violent Deaths, they frequently live to a great Age; as for Instance, *Shah Abbas*, and *Aurengzebe*. Now if we consider the immense Fatigues of these Monarchs, the many Battles they fought, the tedious Marches they made, the Variety of Dangers they run through, and the vast Expence of Spirits that a Life of such continued Action, such intense Thought must occasion; it will not be easy to find in a Country, where the Art of Physic is far from being so perfect as it is even in *Europe*; I say it would be hard to find in such Places, any Medicine capable of producing so extraordinary Effect, if we exclude this of which I am speaking. For though I am very doubtful, and therefore lay no Stress on the Wholesomeness of the Breath 'of Women; yet, in the Seraglios of such Princes, there are always so many Virgins, and these of such near Access to the Person of the Prince, that I cannot but apprehend his Vigour and Health, to be greatly supported by these odoriferous Streams of salutary Air. I cannot help adding what seems to be still a stronger Argument in Favour of my Supposition, and that is, that the *Arab* Princes, scattered through the Dominions of the Grand Signior, who are less exposed to foreign Wars, or domestic Intrigues, than other oriental Princes, actually live beyond the ordinary Age of Man, and die at last as every Man ought to die, because their Blood can run no longer. At least, I have a right to make use of a Circumstance so probable as this is, in support of my Opinion, when it is thought reasonable to take a Fact, which has only a superficial Resemblance to the Case I have stated, as a sufficient ground for an Objection against the Position I am endeavouring to make good; Probability is certainly nearer a-kin to Evidence; than a bare Similitude of Circumstances, which vanishes upon a strict Examination.

After these Excursions, let us return to a more strict Examination

Examination of our Subject : I have already shown how the Breath of Virgins may operate upon old Men, when mix'd with the common Air, and so respired by them. But let us consider a little, whether these numerous and subtile Effluvia may not operate some other Way than this. All Physicians agree, since the Doctrine of the Circulation of the Blood has been established, as well as made known to the World, by the Skill and Learning of that incomparable *Englishman* Doctor *Harvey* (m); that a great Part of our Aliments, after entering the Blood, are thrown out from thence in so imperceptible a Manner, that this kind of Evacuation is very properly stiled insensible Perspiration. This was first carefully examined by *Sanctorius*, who found that it was far more considerable alone, than all the other animal Secretions taken together (n). If this be so, and that it is so, no Man in his Senses now doubts, then it follows, that there must be prodigious Quantities of the Matter of this insensible Perspiration mixed in the Air, surrounding the perspiring Bodies, and consequently this Air must be impregnated strongly with the Qualities inherent to that Matter.

If we push this Enquiry still further, and labour to make ourselves acquainted with the Nature of the Particles that are thus thrown off, a little Attention will make that Matter plain. For since insensible Perspiration

(m) Our Author alludes here to the remarkable Felicity of Doctor Harvey, who first found out, and then fully demonstrated the Doctrine of the Circulation of the Blood, which was at first, as most new Inventions are, opposed with great Heat and Spleen; but came at last to be as generally received and admired, as it deserves. Doctor Harvey died in 1657, thirty Years after he first published his Discovery, in his *Exercitatio Anatomica de motu cordis*; printed at Francfort, in 1627. (n) See his famous *Treatise de Medicina Statica*, which the English Reader may consult in his own Language, translated by the judicious and indefatigable Dr. Quincy.

is owing to the Circulation of the Blood, it necessarily follows, that the Particles thrown off by the Blood, must participate of the Nature of that Fluid from which they are thrown off. Now we know the Blood of young People to be soft, oily, and balsamic, as well as we can know any Thing, because this appears to us from its Effects, which are a brisk and lively Disposition, perfect Health, and quick Growth; to all which, a Blood thus constituted, is absolutely necessary. Upon these Principles, it is plain, that the Matter perspired by young People in such Circumstances, as I have supposed the Pupils of *Hermippus* to be, must have all the Qualities of their Blood, and be a soft, smooth, slippery, balsamic Steam, continually flowing from their Bodies, and as they are constantly drawing in the circumambient Air, and continually throwing off this Matter, they must in the compass of a few Hours, absolutely change the whole Mass of Air, in a Room where they are taught by their Preceptor, who, in that Case, will receive into himself a large Proportion of this perspirable Matter, in the same Manner that it is thrown off by them.

There are many People, I know, who will be apt to treat this Part of my Discourse as whimsical and chimerical, and for this very Reason, I have not insisted upon it so largely as I might have done, or in such strong and direct Terms. I might have entered nicely into the Computations that have been made of the Quantity of Matter thrown off in this Way, and from thence I might have deduced many curious, and to competent Judges, convincing Proofs; but I affect not this critical Kind of Writing, which might possibly deprive me of a great Number of Readers, and secure the Assent only of those who are least likely to carry this Doctrine into Practice. But let me have leave to observe, that what I have laid down is an indisputable Fact, and not among the Num-

ber of those about which much has been written, and nothing settled. *Sanctorius*, who first treated this Matter judiciously and practically, had the Honour to perfect his Discovery, and to carry the Matter as far as it could go, and this in the best Method, I mean that of Experiments; for he had a Chair fixed on a Ballance, and in such a Manner accommodated with Springs, as to discover the slightest Alteration in his Weight. By the Use of this Chair, and by constant Observation of what he eat, drank, perspired, and evacuated every other Way, he came at the certain Knowledge of what he has delivered, and therefore we may, with the utmost Confidence, believe, that at least, one half of what we eat or drink, after passing through the Blood, is thrown off in the Way I have described(o).

A very ingenious *Frenchman*, to whom the World is indebted for as profitable, and, at the same time, as pleasant a Work, as any published of late Years, has endeavoured to illustrate this Doctrine by a very well contrived Fiction, which I will repeat to the Reader, because nothing can serve my purpose better, as I am persuaded nothing can entertain him more(p).

" Day after our Arrival at *London* several Tradesmen came to our Lodgings, in order to sell us the Commodities and Curiosities of their Country. Every one of the Company fixed readily his Attention on what pleased him most. Some bought Gloves, others Ribbons, and others Silk Stockings; the Mer-

(o) We must consider, in reasoning upon this Subject that *Sanctorius* wrote in *Italy*, where the Perspiration may be reasonably supposed much greater than in Northern Countries, which our Author was aware of, and has made a proper Deduction. (p) *Mélanges d'Histoire et de Littérature par M. de Vigneul-Marville. Tom. ii. p. 461.* It may not be amiss to observe, that this is not the true Name of the Author of that curious Book, but one under which he chose to hide it, on Account of some free Censures contained in that diverting Miscellany.

chandize

" chandize, which fell to my Share, was several Per-
 " spective Glasses and Microscopes. He who sold them
 " was an excellent Mathematician, a Man of great
 " Capacity, and could speak *French* tollerably well. I
 " kept him to Dinner, and as he was mighty well pleas-
 " ed with the Entertainment, he told me after he rose
 " from Table, that he had a great Curiosity to shew
 " me. He then took out of a Shagreen Box an In-
 " strument in a Tortoisshell Case, which proved to be
 " a most excellent Microscope. I may well bestow this
 " Epithet upon it, since it was so excellent, as not only
 " to discover an Infinity of Bodies imperceptible to
 " the naked Eye, but even the Atoms of *Epicurus*, the
 " subtile Matter of *Descartes*, the Vapours of the Earth,
 " those which flow from our own Bodies, and such as
 " derive to us here the Influence of the Stars.

" The first Experiment I made was looking on the
 " Person from whom I receiv'd it, at the Distance of
 " four or five Paces, which gave me an Opportunity of
 " discerning an infinite Number of little Worms, that
 " were feeding most voraciously upon his Cloaths, by
 " which I perceived, that, contrary to the common
 " Opinion, it is not we who wear out our Cloaths, but
 " they are fairly eaten off our Backs by these invisible
 " Insects; I changed my Situation, and considering
 " my Mathematician in another light, he appeared to
 " me enveloped in a dark Cloud. He told me, that
 " this Appearance was owing to his perspiring strongly
 " after Dinner, and that this ought to convince me of
 " the Truth of what *Sanctorius* had delivered in respect
 " to the Proportions between this and other Secre-
 " tions.

" We next went into the Kitchen, where there was
 " a large Piece of Beef roasting for the Servants, and I had
 " the Pleasure of seeing with the same Microscope, how
 " the fire seperates all the Parts of the Wood, upon
 " which

“ which it acts, and darts them by the Violence of its Motion against the Beef that turns before it, wounding it as it were with an infinite Number of Shafts, and so tearing it to Pieces, some of which are converted into Juice, and others into a delicate Kind of Smoke or Vapour, which filled the Kitchen, and was very sensibly distinguished by our Nostrials.

“ Going out of the House, we saw four young Men playing at Ball. I, at first Sight, felt a strong Inclination in Favour of one, and as strong an Aversion against another, whence I began earnestly to wish that this might win, and that might lose. I examined both with the Microscope, and thereby easily distinguished the Source of these Passions. As the Men were extremely heated with their Exercise, they perspired strongly, so that Clouds of the Matter flowing from them reached us. My Glass shewed me distinctly, that the Matter, perspired by him for whom I had an Inclination, was exactly similar to what was perspired by myself; whereas, the Matter flowing from the other Person, was absolutely unlike to mine in all respects, and so jagged and bearded, that it seemed to wound and pierce me like so many Arrows. Hence I discerned, that the true Cause of our sudden Inclinations and Aversions consists in the Figures of the Matter perspiring from us, and from others, and in the Union or Contrariety of these insensible Vapours.

“ We went out of the City, and, at some Miles Distance, we saw some Gentlemen diverting themselves in coursing a Hare; as the poor Creature passed almost close by us, I had just Time to catch a Glance of her with my Glass. She appeared to me like a Ball of Fire, moving with prodigious Rapidity, and leaving a mighty Smoke behind her. This was the Matter perspired by the Animal, and I saw that the

“ Dogs

“ Dogs followed exactly the Tract of that Smoke, and
 “ were never at all at a Loss, except when the Wind dissip-
 “ pated the Cloud that issued from the flying Hare”.

In this short Account, our Author very ingeniously rallies such as expect to have ocular Demonstration of Things, that do not admit of any such Evidence. His Microscope is nothing more than an Invention to censure their Folly, and to expose the Madness of having that verified to the Senses, which can only be apprehended by Reason; yet this Kind of Weakness still prevails in the World, and, I dare say, there is many a Reader who would laugh at the Story of the Hare, as an absolute Fiction, and afterwards blush to see the same Thing gravely laid down by so judicious, so intelligent a Person, as the great *Boerhaave* (q). There seems to be nothing more unintelligible or absurd, than to assert that there are Things which are continually losing Part of their Weight, and yet never grow discernibly lighter; and yet this we see in the Case of the Antimonial Cup, which when five hundred Times made use of, and after bestowing an emetic Quality on five hundred Glasses of Wine, remains just as heavy as it was at first. We may say the same Thing of the odoriferous Effluvia of Ambergrease, and the less agreeable Steam of *Assafætida*.

(p) See his *Chymistry*, Vol. i. p. 151. Wherein his Words are thus translated. The most subtle Part of the Juices of Animals is a fine Spirit, which is continually exhaling, wherein the proper Character of the Animal seems to reside, and whereby it is distinguished from all others. This we may infer from Hounds, which through a long Tract of Ground, and a Multitude of cross Treads, will distinguish a particular Animal out of a whole Flock, the Effluvia of whose Footsteps it had lately scented; or will find out their Master through an hundred cross Ways, in the Middle of a confused Concourse of People. By this we may infer, how thin and subtle, yet how different from all other Kinds of Bodies these Effluvia must be; they seem of an oily Origin, or to reside in a subtle Vehicle of an oily Kind, as may appear both from the Analogy of Things and other Properties.

None of these Things can be brought under the Cognizance of all our Senses ; it is sufficient to convince our Reason if they fall under any one of them. For Instance, if I plainly discern the Smell of a Rose at a certain Distance, my Reason will tell me that I am within the Atmosphere of that Flower, because it is impossible that I should discern its Odour by the Smell, if its Effluvia did not strike the proper Organ of that Sense in me. Hence, with a little Reflection, I can easily form a Notion of this Flower, perspiring an infinite Number of odoriferous Particles, which, for a certain Distance, so much overcome all the other different Sorts of Matter floating in the Air, as to become so many Objects of my Sense of smelling (r).

But now, if we take this the other Way, and consider a Body continually perspiring such a Matter as is insensible to us, that is, Particles so subtile as to escape the Cognizance of all our Organs of Sensation, we must be extremely dull of Apprehension, if we do not conceive, that this perspiring Body must have its Atmosphere, as well as the Rose, or any other fragrant Flower. It is, therefore, I think, a Point set past all Dispute, that if a Number of Virgins are in the Company of an old Man, he must derive from them into himself a great Quantity of that subtile Matter, the Qualities of which have been before described, and especially if we consider, that as these Effluvia escape through the Pores, the Pores must consequently be continually open ; and, if so, they must imbibe from without, as well as give Passage to what comes from within.

I doubt this will appear a new Paradox to many of my Readers, and methinks I see some of them ready to throw my Treatise out of their Hands, and crying with

(r) See a Multitude of these Instances collected, and properly applied in Mr. Boyle's curious Treatise upon Gems.

an Air of Self-sufficiency and Disdain; this poor Man is mad himself, and would fain make us so. But Patience a little, give me leave but to propose a few familiar Questions; and I will defy you to disbelieve what I have laid down. Is there any Thing more common, than to find a Stranguary ensue upon the Application of a Blister, and yet how can this happen, if the Particles of the Cantharides did not enter through the Pores, and thereby create a diversion of that salt watry Fluid, which is usually secreted by the Kidneys, and composes what we call Urine? On the other Hand, it is a thing certain, that Opium used in a Plaister will procure Sleep, which it could not possibly do, if in like Manner it did not find a Passage through the Pores into the Blood: I might likewise take Notice of an Effect that frequently, if not constantly, results from the Application of a Cataplasm of Camomile, to the Stomach, the bitter Taste of which Herb, in the Space of two Hours, is discerned on the Palate. I will mention one Instance more, which is at once so strong, and so common, as to put the Matter quite out of Dispute; I mean the ordinary Method of raising Salivations by Uction; for whoever considers this attentively must be sensible, that the Body may be very strongly affected by Things that enter only through the Pores (s).

I cannot help taking Notice of a very singular Passage in a *French* Historian, whose Character is perfectly well established, and which Passage, in my Apprehension, may contribute not a little to render all that I have asserted equally credible and clear. This Author tells us (t); that in the Year 1346, there broke out of the

(s) The Montpelier way of Salivating is still a stronger Proof of this, since it argues, that this Method of raising it is safer, more equal, and better adapted to the Ends it is to answer, than that of taking Things by the Mouth. (t) *Abregé Chronologique de l'Histoire de France, par le Sieur de Mezeray, Tom. iii. p. 32.*

Earth

Earth in *Cathay*, which is that Part of *Great Tartary* bordering upon *China*, a certain Vapour, so prodigiously stinking, as to destroy all living Creatures. This, like a subterraneous Fire, after it once escaped, rolled over two hundred Leagues of Country, devouring even the very Trees and Stones, and affected the Air in a wonderful Manner. From *Cathay*, it passed through *Asia* and *Greece*, from thence it crossed over into *Africa*, and after ravaging that Country, it entered *Europe*, in 1348, making such Havock in *France*, that not so much as a City, Village, or single House escaped, and from thence it passed into other Countries, so as to reach even the utmost Extremities of the North; the Venom, says my Author, was so contagious, as to infect even by the Sight. It was remarked, that it continued exactly five Months in every Country through which it passed. In those Places where it was most favourable, it left only a third of the Inhabitants, in most about a fifteenth, in some not above a twentieth Part. Can one conceive that an Exhalation should pass quite round the Globe, and produce such terrible Effects wherever it came, and shall we believe that Exhalations that are continually surrounding us, shall have no Effect at all? Or ought we to apprehend, that if such dreadful Feats can be wrought by stinking and noxious Exhalations, there is nothing nutritive or Salutary to be performed by those of an opposite Kind? I must confess, that I see no Ground for such a belief.

There is undoubtedly, as the learned *Bacon* lays it down, a healthy Sympathy, as well as a morbid Infection (u); and as, in spite of all the Care and Caution we

(u) See p. 64. in the Quotation from *Bacon*. If this Argument be not allowed, it will be hard to assign any rational Cause, why one Place should be more healthy than another; and to understand this Doctrine perfectly the Reader ought to consult Mr. Boyle's Treatise of the Wholesomeness and Unwholesomeness of the Air.

can take, we find it extremely hard to guard against, and to ward off the latter; so, by a Parity of Reason, it should seem, that of all the Methods contributing to Health, the former ought to prove most efficacious: That is to say, we think there is no Way hitherto laid down for preserving the Vigour of the Body, and thereby securing such a Supply of animal Spirits as may support the Dominion of the Soul in its full Extent and Activity, so feasible as this, which is suggested to be the Source of the Longevity and Healthfulness of *Hermippus*. For if insensible Perspiration be made through the Pores, so that there is a continual Steam transpiring from every Body, then it follows, that where an old Man is constantly attended by many young Women, his Body must be surrounded with an infinite Quantity of the perspirable Matter flowing from them, and if, on the other Hand, he not only perspires through the Pores, but also receives by them, as has been already demonstrated, the finest and most spirituous Particles of other Bodies into his own; then it is very evident, that such an old Man must be, as I observed before, in such a Situation, as will enable him to draw the greatest possible Benefit from this most comfortable Medicine.

The more strictly we consider the Structure of the human Body, and the certain Causes of Health and Sickness, the more Reason we shall find to be satisfied with, and to acquiesce in the System we have laid down. Reason and Experience have convinced us, that the Body is a pneumatico-hydraulic Machine, composed of Fluids and Solids, and that a good Constitution, or healthy Disposition, arises from the proper Motion of the one, and a due Circulation of the other. It is also no less certain, that this Motion, and this Circulation, depend reciprocally on each other. For as the Circulation is obstructed, lessened, and in some Measure stopped from

the

the Want of a proper Motion of the Solids, occasioned by their Loss of the true Tone and Texture which they ought to have ; so this very Loss, on the other Hand, arises from their not receiving a timely and suitable Supply of Nutrition from the circulating Juices (w). Hence that Dryness, Stiffness, and Rigidity of the Fibres, which properly causes the Disease we call old Age ; to prevent which, in a natural, rational, and physical Way, the only proper Method is, to provide a constant, equal, and effectual Supply of smooth balsamic and lubricating Particles from the circulating Fluids. If this could once be done, it is, I think, very apparent, that old Age could no more attack the human Body, than any other Disease, against which proper Precautions may be taken. But, as it is not to be expected that human Wisdom should be able to perfect such a Method, all that we can reasonably hope for, is to arrive at some Proficiency therein ; so that though we are not able to prevent old Age, we may have it at least in our Power to retard it. It is in a Manner incredible, that by Art, a Man should be able to reach two or three hundred ; but that he should live and enjoy Life to upwards of an hundred ; the wisest of the Antients believed, and the Methods they prescribed and practised for this Purpose are all founded upon my Principles, as appears from their Use of Frictions, Baths, and Ointments, all of which had been idle and improper, if they had not conceived it possible to charge the Fluids, by means of them, with such Particles as were fit to repair the Losses of the Solids (x).

(w) Boerhaav. Instit. Medic. Sect. 1053, 1054. (x) Instead of citing Physicians, I shall refer the Reader to Plutarch's learned Treatise on Health and long Life, where, in a narrow Compass, he will see the Sense of the best Writers in Antiquity on this Subject.

Hermippus undoubtedly made use of a far more rational, as well as efficacious Medicine. For we have proved, by all the Methods that the Nature of our Argument will allow, the Particles respired and perspired by young Persons in full Health, to be the smoothest, softest, and most nutritive that can be conceived. On the other hand, the Method he took in applying these, not only by receiving them in the Air every Time he drew Breath, but drawing them also in through all the Pores of his Body, by that Sort of animal Action, which is in a manner spontaneous, must have encreased their Effects, and taking this altogether, one cannot help considering him as a Person in a constant warm Bath of the most spirituous and unctuous Humours, which were continually pervading him, at the same Time, that by the Vapours of the young Peoples Breaths, he drank not so much Air as Life. But if we will add one Circumstance further, and that not at all forced and improbable, *viz.* That he caused some of these young People to lie with him, as *David* did *Abishag*; we shall then carry the Medicine to its highest Pitch, and shall easily apprehend, that during that Time of free and copious Perspiration, he must have received such a large Supply of Nutritive Spirits, as effectually refreshed his Nature, and restored, in a great Measure, that waste which is occasioned by performing the ordinary Functions of Life (y).

We may add the last Degree of Force to this Manner of reasoning, if we may be permitted to argue from contraries. What is more common than to see a Woman advanced in Years grow not only brisk and lively, but strong and healthy, by marrying a young Husband.

(y) The Opinions of many learned Physicians might have been cited in support of this Doctrine, if we had not been afraid of tiring the Reader too much; but if he is extremely inquisitive, he may consult the following Writers, *Christian. Forman. de Fascinat. Magic. p. 1014. Borellus Cent. iii. Observat. 28. Lan. de motu Transpirat. lib. ii. cap. ii. prop. iv. p. 56.*

She drinks his Breath, exhales his Spirits, extracts his Moisture, and thereby invigorates herself, while the poor Man suffers from the impure Contagion of her Breath and Vapours, and, from the Malignity of this ill-chosen Union, sinks very quickly into apparent Weakness, and falls at last into what the common People call a galloping Consumption. Strange! that the Death of a young Man should result from his Marriage with an old Woman, and that the taking of a young Wife should repair the Waste, and prolong the Life of an old Man (z). Yet, so it is, and upon this Subject I will venture to set down a remarkable Instance from the Writings of an unexceptionable Witness, one, whose Repute for Veracity is as well established, as his Fame, for Learning in general, and for his particular Skill in Physic.

The Person I mean is *Peter Lotichius*, and the Example he gives us, this; A Man upwards of eighty Years old married, after the Loss of his first Wife, a second, who was but twenty-five; when they had been married about a Year, he fell into a very extraordinary and dangerous Distemper; he grew at last so weak and low, that his Case was judged to be desperate. By degrees, however, he grew better, and as his strength increased, his grey Hair and white Beard fell off gradually, and his Skin began likewise to peel; soon after, a light strong Hair began to peep through the Skin of his Head, which in time fell down to his Shoulders in strong natural Curls. His Beard came in the same Manner, and his Face acquired a beautiful and florid Complexion; in a Word, he became again a sound, lusty, and, if the Expression may be allowed, a young Man, which his

(z) The Author has very judiciously omitted any Instance of this Kind, probably for two Reasons; first, because every Man's Memory may supply him with Examples; and secondly to avoid saying too much on a Subject offensive to the Fair Sex.

Wife was forced to attest, since she had by him afterwards several fine Boys (a). This is an Instance much to my Purpose, since it proves the prodigious Efficacy of human Breath, and the Matter perspired by a juvenile Body. Yet give me leave to observe, that this extraordinary Effort of Nature might possibly contribute to shorten the old Man's Life, who, without the Enjoyment of this young Woman, might have preserved his Constitution many Years, and have lived in the perfect Fruition of those Pleasures peculiar to the Mind, and for the Enjoyment of which it seems most rational that Life should be prolonged.

There is something of the same Kind observable in the well known History of the famous *English* Long-liver *Thomas Parre*, and these Particulars are very curiously distinguished by the great Anatomist *Bartholin*, who set down his Account of him, not as a Curiosity to please Children, but as a singular and memorable Fact, worthy of the Attention and Consideration of Men. This *Parre*, was born at *Winnington*, in the County of *Salop*, in 1483, and passed his Youth in very hard Labour, and, which is as remarkable, in Sobriety and Chastity. At fourscore, he married his first Wife *Jane*, by whom he had two Children, neither of which were long-lived, or shewed any extraordinary Signs of Strength; the first died at the Age of a Month, and the second lived but a few Years. At an 102 he became enamoured of *Katharine Milton*, whom he got with Child, and did Penance in the Church for it. Some Months before he died, the Earl of *Arundel* brought him up to *London*, and presented him to King *Charles I.* but through the change of the Air, and in Living, he died soon after; though it was believed he might have survived many

(a) *Observat. Medic. lib. iv. Observ. 3.*

Years, if he had remained in his own Country, and led the same Life he was wont to do (b). This Man was over-grown with Hair, and during the latter Part of his Life, slept very much. In the same Country lived the famous Countess of *Desmond*, whose Age was unknown to herself, but extremely well supported by the Authority of others; since from Deeds, Settlements, and other disputable Testimonies, it appear'd clearly, that she was upwards of an hundred and forty, according to the Computation of the great Lord *Bacon*, who knew her personally, and remarks this Particularity about her, that she thrice changed her Teeth (c). We have it on the Credit of *Alexander Benedictus*, that there was a Lady of his Acquaintance, who, at the Age of Four-score, had a complete new Sett of Teeth, and, though her Hair had all fallen off before, yet, at the same time she cut her Teeth, it grew again, of like Colour and Strength as at first (d). *Bartholin*, the famous Anatomist, whom I cited before, furnishes us not only with another Example, and informs us, it was procured by Art, but gives us also the Receipt by which it was done, and which he assures us was no other than an Extract of black Hellebore, dissolved in an Infusion of Wine and Roses (e). If I mistake not, the illustrious *Boyle* hath something to the same Purpose about the Quintessence of *Balm* (f).

If we consider these extraordinary Relations attentively, and reflect on the Weight of Evidence, with which some of them, and especially those of *Parre*, and the

(b) *Bartholin. Hist. Anatom. cent. v. hist. 28. p. 47. 48.* Some Accounts make *Parre* much older, and Place his Death in 1651; I have consulted his Monument in Westminster-Abby, and there I find he died on the 15th of November, 1635, aged upwards of 152; when his Body was opened, his Bowels appeared very sound, only the Lungs were somewhat injured, which was thought to be owing to the Grossness of the Town-air, and that he might have lived much longer, if on his first Complaint he had been let
Blood

the Countess of *Desmond*, are supported, we must be satisfied, that the human Body is a Machine capable of very extraordinary Changes. For we ought to consider, that if we are once brought to believe, that a Woman thrice changed her Teeth, it is as clear a Proof of the Possibility of the Fact, as if we had twenty other Examples. Now, if there be a Possibility of renovating human Nature, why, on the one Side, should we not study it? Or why, on the other, should this kind of Study be treated as a vain and fanciful Thing? If the Office of a Physician be honourable; if there be something Noble and God-like in curing Diseases, in stopping the Progress of Pain and Misery, and warding off the Dart of Death, for a few Years; there is certainly something much more excellent in the Art of renewing the human Body; securing Health and Vigour, thro' a long Course of Years; keeping not only Death, but his younger Brethern, Age and Decrepitness, at a distance. Let us remember upon this Occasion, what I have already cited from the learned Monk *Bacon*; what, says he, if *Aristotle*, *Plato*, *Hippocrates* and *Galen*, were ignorant of this Secret; Is that a Proof that we shall not attain it? Were they not ignorant of many other Secrets that are now commonly known; why then should we imagine the Barrier of Science fixed here, rather than any where else? Why should we not find out the Means of prolonging Life, as well as a Method for squaring the Circle? Is not the former of as great Consequence to us as Men? Or is the latter a more useful Proof of the Strength of human Understanding? Let us proceed

Blood (c) *Verulam. Hist. vitæ et Mortis. Sir Walter Raleigh's History of the World. lib. I. cap. v. §. 5.* (d) *Donat. Hist. Med. mirab. lib. VI. c. 2. p. 300.* (e) *Hist. Anatomic. cent. v. hist. 28. p. 51.* (f) See his Treatise on Specific Remedies. As to the Medicine its self it was contrived by *Paracelsus*.

then;

then ; let us collect and compare (since the Nature of the thing forbids other Experiments) such Examples as we meet with in authentic Histories ; and let us in this, as in other Cases, endeavour to convert History into Science, by observing nicely the Particulars in every Relation, and endeavour thereby to trace out the Manner of Nature's working ; for if this can be once done, we shall be soon able to follow her Steps. If Nature at any time vouchsafes this Favour to Men, it follows, that their Bodies have no Incapacity of receiving it ; that is to say, if every Man's Body was not so constituted, as to exceed by far the ordinary Limits of Life, it could not possibly happen that any Man's Life should be so extended.

Father *Maffeus*, who wrote a celebrated History of the *Ladies*, which has been always esteem'd a perfect Model in point of Veracity, as well as the Elegance of its Composition, gives us the following Account, after having related the Death of the Sultan of *Cambaya*, and the Conquest of his Kingdom by the *Portuguese*.

" They presented, says he, at this Time to the General, a Man born amongst the ancient *Gangards*, who are now called *Bengalars*, who was 335 Years of Age. There were various Circumstances which took from this Account all Suspicion of Falshood. In the first Place, his Age was confirmed by a kind of universal Tradition, all the People averring that the oldest Men in their Infancy spoke of this Man's Age with Astonishment ; and this old Man had then living in his own House, a Son of ninety Years old. In the next Place his Ignorance was so great, and he was so absolutely void of Learning, that this removed all ground of Doubt, for by the strength of his Memory he was a kind of living Chronicle, relating distinctly, and exactly, whatever had happened within

“ the Compass of his Life, together with all the Cir-
 “ cumstances relating to it. He had often lost and re-
 “ newed his Teeth; his Hair, both on his Head and
 “ Beard, grew insensibly grey, and then as insensibly
 “ turned black again. The first Age of his Life he
 “ passed in Idolatry; but for the two last Centuries of
 “ his Life, had been a *Mohammedan*. The Sultan had
 “ allowed him a Pension for his Subsistence, the conti-
 “ nuance of which he begged from the General; the
 “ same Motive remaining, which had first induced the
 “ King of *Cambaya* to grant him a Subsistence, that is
 “ to say, his great Age, and the extraordinary Circum-
 “ stances that had attended his Life, these prevailed on
 “ the General to grant his Request (g).” Thus far
Maffeus.

But as it may be very easily conceived, that so strange
 a Story as this must have created many Enquiries, and
 have either sunk in the World, or, in consequence of
 those Enquiries, received Abundance of concurring Te-
 stimonies; I shall therefore beg Leave to add some very
 remarkable Particulars in relation to this celebrated Long-
 liver, from the *Portuguese* Historian *Ferdinand Lopez de*
Castagneda, who was Historiographer Royal. He tells
 us, that, in the Year 1536, there was a Man presented
 to the Vice-roy of the *Indies*, *Nunio de Cugna*, who was
 near 340 Years old. He remembered that he had seen
 the City in which he dwelt, and which was then one of
 the most populous in the *Indies*, a very inconsiderable
 Place. He had changed his Hair and recovered his
 Teeth four Times, and, when the Vice-roy saw him, his
 his Head and Beard were black, but the Hair weak and
 thin. He asserted, that in the Course of his Life he had
 seven hundred Wives, some of which died, and the re-
 rest he had put away. The King of *Portugal* caused

(g) *Historiarum Indicarum lib. xi. c. 4.*

strict Enquiry to be made into this Matter, and an annual Account of the State of the old Man's Health, brought him by the Returns of the Fleet from *India*. This long-lived Person was a Native of the Kingdom of *Bengala*, and died at the Age of 370 (*b*). This History is in itself very curious, founded upon good Authority, and therefore transcribed from the Authors I have mentioned by many curious and inquisitive Persons, who were also proper Judges of this Nature, and who have none of them intimated any Doubt or Suspicion as to the Matters of Fact (*i*). I therefore submit it to the Reader's Consideration, whether it be not a Matter worthy of Reflection, that there is a certain Strength in the human Body, which, assisted by some lucky Circumstances, enables it to renovate itself, sometimes once, as in the Case mentioned by *Lotichius*, sometimes oftner, as in that of the Countess of *Desmond*, who bred all her Teeth thrice; and this Native of *Bengala*, who changed his Hair and Teeth four times; and there is another Circumstance of which I cannot but take Notice, as it favours my Doctrine very much; that this Man, who lived to an Age much greater than any, which we have by good Authority, had so many Wives, to the Efficacy of whose Breaths, and the insensible Effluvia of their wholesome Bodies, I should not scruple to attribute, in a great Measure, his extraordinary Longevity. These, I say, are Points which deserve to be consider'd; since, if such a Power there be in the human Constitution, we ought not to despair of finding out Methods, which may contribute to its manifesting its self more frequently; which would be certainly a far greater Benefit to Mankind than the bare Study of the proper Remedies for u-

(*b*) Hist. Lusitan. lib. viii. (*i*) Bartholini Hist. Anatom. cent. v. hist. 28. p. 46. Camer. hor. Subcis. cent. II. c. 3. p. 278. Hakewill's Apol. p. 163.

usual and common Distempers. Let me add, that perhaps if such a Method could be found, it must also defend from almost all Diseases, by procuring such a Vigour, as should not permit the Entrance of them.

I have hitherto declined speaking of long-lived Animals, upon which, however, the great Lord *Bacon* has insisted much. *Apollonius*, if we may believe the Writer of his Life, discovered in Mount *Caucasus* an extraordinary Secret in natural History. There are Apes there, it seems, which feed upon a Kind of Pepper, and these Apes are eaten by old Lyons, to renew their Strength and make them young (*k*). I must confess, I suspect this to be rather an Allegory, than a Fable, and I should incline to interpret it thus; that lofty and ambitious Spirits over-act the Bodies in which they inhabit, and induce a premature old Age; if this Effect be not prevented by frequently unbending their Spirits in the Company of humorous and diverting People, who are well enough marked out by Apes well seasoned. Thus *Agésilas*, the famous King of *Sparta*, when he was extremely old, amused himself by playing with young Children. The great *Scipio* diverted himself in the Company of *Terence*, and *Augustus* had always about him the most sprightly Wits of *Rome*. Cardinal *Richelieu* had sunk under the Fatigues of his Ministry, if, from Time to Time he had not been relieved by the humorous Buffoonry of *Boisrobert*. *Lewis XIV.* was as delicate in his Amusements, as great in his Councils, and shewed as true Judgment in approving a Play of *Molière's*, as a Project of *Louvois's*. We are not therefore to understand the Antients literally, when they deliver to us those Stories which appear to us incredible. But to return to long-lived Animals.

(*k*) *Philostat. in vit. Apollon. Tyan. lib. iv. c. i.*

It is certain, that Eagles arrive at a great Age, and that they preserve, almost as long as they live, that prodigious Strength which distinguishes them from other Birds. We know too, that the Eagle renews his Plumage annually, and it is not easy to conceive how this should be done without a total Change of its Juices. The Stag is another long-lived Animal, though I cannot believe many of the Stories that are told about it. I mention it only, that I may observe, that annually it casts its Horns, which is another Proof of the Renewal of animal Juices. But this is still more conspicuous in the Viper, which in the Spring casts its Coat, and comes abroad youthful as the Year. If the Eagle, the Stag, and the Viper were not common to every Climate, I make no doubt that the Facts related of them would be treated as Fables; but as they happen every Day, and under our Eyes, we are obliged to own them for Truths. Yet, what Use have we made of these Truths? Who can assign the Causes why these Animals live longer than others; or, how it comes to pass, that Nature grants them this Privilege of Rejuvenescency? Yet such an Enquiry might repay our Industry abundantly (1). It is said that we learned Physic from Animals, that Dogs taught us the Use of Emetics, and that Birds put us in head of Clysters. If they were our Tutors in the lower Part of Physic, why should we disclaim their Instructions in this sublimer Part of that Science?

It is not only the Inhabitants of the Land and Air who attain to such vast Ages; such as dwell in the Waters seem to have yet a larger Share of Life, of which I will give one well attested Instance out of many. In the Year 1497, in a Fish-pond in *Suabia*, near *Huilprin* in *Germany*, they took a Carp of a prodigious Size,

(1) Aldrovand. Ornitholog. Gesner. de avibus lib. iii. Aristot. de animalibus.

which

which had in his Ear a Ring of Copper, with these Words in Latin. I am the first Fish that was put into this Pond by the Hands of *Frederick II.* Governor of the World, the 5th of *October*, 1230. This Carp appeared to have lived 259 Years, and probably might have lived much longer, had he not been taken out. I cannot apprehend, that much Use will ever be made of Examples of this Sort, because Fishes live in another Medium, and seem to have their Lives regulated by Laws different from those of other Animals (*m*). We may say of them, that if they do not, like the Eagle, renew their Vigour, yet they seem never to grow old, or to express myself more clearly, Age with them seems exempt from Infirmities. The broken Claw of a Lobster grows again, which, if seriously considered, is very wonderful; and it is generally believed, that most Fishes grow as long as they live, which, if true, is not easily accounted for.

What I would infer from all these Hints is no more than this, that Nature has furnished us with numerous Examples of what we seek, long Life with the Preservation of Youth. We see this daily in Birds and in Beasts, in Fish and in Reptiles, and yet we sit down satisfied, that speedy old Age, and premature Death, belong to us by the Law of Nature. Where is the Justice, where is the Consistency of this; especially, if we consider, that the Flesh of many long-lived Animals has a Quality wonderfully restorative? We know that mighty Things have been done by feeding upon Vipers, and not much less by living upon Shell-Fish; the Bone of a Stag's Heart is held to be a very high Cordial, the Reason of which is something singular, and therefore I will take Notice of it (*n*). This Bone is the strongest Proof of

(*m*) *Joinston. Hist. Nat.* (*n*) This Bone of a Stag's Heart enters into all the Receipts of Bacon the Monk, as well as into all those that are mentioned by the Arabian Physicians; and as they transcribe Greek Authors, it is easy to see, that this Medicine was of great Antiquity,

the Stag's Longevity, for it is nothing else but the Root of the Aorta, grown bonny through a long Series of Years. We are therefore in the wrong to take it for granted, that Nature has passed such a Sentence upon us, when the Record of Experience proves directly the contrary, and when we so plainly see that the Seeds of long Life are in long-lived Creatures. But we pass this Sentence and execute it upon ourselves. We sit down not patient, but dejected, under what we esteem a common Calamity, and desire rather to make the most of a short Life, than to fatigue ourselves with the Study of the Means by which it may be prolonged.

I had almost forgot an Objection which has been started from a supposed Law of Nature, with respect to Animals, *viz.* That those have their appointed Times, and that most of them are but of very short Periods; the great Lord *Bacon* hath taken much Pains to make this out, though with a better View than the supporting such an Objection, but after all, I very much doubt the Matter of Fact, *viz.* That there are any such immutable Laws, that Animals cannot transgress. For Instance, it is said, that the Age of a Horse, I mean his extreme Age, is twenty or twenty-four; History furnishes us with Instances that contradicts this. I will mention but one: *Mezeray* tells us, that a certain Duke of *Gascoigny* paid his Homage to the King of *Burgundy* on a Horse that was an hundred Years old, and which was still vigorous and full of Mettle (*o*). But admitting the Matter of Fact, where lies the Force of the Objection? Some Animals reach ten, and others it is confessed, live much beyond a hundred; what has this to do with the Life of Man? why should it prove, that we are stinted to Fourscore, more than that we have it in our Power to live as long as Stags and Eagles. It may be said, that

(*o*) *Histoire abrégé de France*, tom. i. p. 401.

there

there is a certain Gradation in these Periods, and that as each Animal has its assigned Term, so likewise has Man. But we proved the contrary of this, by all the Methods of Argumentation yet invented; we shewed it from Scripture, from Reason, from Experience; and if all this is not sufficient to baffle a Notion founded only on Fancy, why, let those who are fond of it enjoy it. I do not think that Life ought to be forced upon People; my Creed goes no further than this, *That if we seek we may find, if we knock it will be opened*; and this I am led to say, because I find it so in other Pursuits, where Men follow Nature, and not their own Notions. What mighty Discoveries has the *Newtonian* Philosophy afforded, which had been for ever hid from Men, if they had continued to follow the Visions of *Descartes*? How much more certain the Astronomy of our Times, than that of our Ancestors? Yet some say, that all these Discoveries are only lost Truths revived. Be it so, and let us return to the Search of that Truth which was known to *Hermippus*, and which has been so long lost to us.

If, therefore, after all that has been said, there remain yet any Doubts upon the Mind of the Reader, we shall endeavour by all Means to remove these, as well for the Sake of his Satisfaction, as that, after so much Pains already taken, we may not fail in our Attempt, and have this Dissertation considered only as a literary Amusement; whereas, we intend it as a serious and useful Discourse. The Antients, who seem to have studied this Matter with the greatest Assiduity, and whose Opinions, generally speaking, on mature Examination, appear not altogether unreasonable to the Moderns, observe with respect to the Causes of old Age, that they are chiefly three. First, the circumambient Air, which dries up the natural Moisture in Man, at the same Time, that the innate

Heat

Heat of the Body consumes it, as the necessary Substance on which the Flame of Life must feed. The second is the Toil and Motion of the Body, which likewise wastes that aerial Humidity which is so necessary to Health and Life; the last is the Passions of the Mind, which, according to the Sentiments of the learned *Avicenna*, have greater Influence than both the other Causes taken together, which will seem extremely reasonable, if we consider how close a Connection there is between the Passions of the Mind, and the Motion of the animal Spirits, which particularly appears in Madness, when we compare the Circumstances attending it, as a Disease of the Mind, with those by which it also appears to be a bodily Distemper.

Such as are acquainted with that mysterious Kind of Philosophy, which was in the highest Credit with the learned Vulgar of the last Age, and which is now as unreasonably discredited amongst the same People, and regarded only by such as enquire after Truths, and not received Opinions; this Philosophy, I say, teaches us, that there is a great Correspondence between the Body of the Earth, and the Body of Man, whence the Patrons of this Doctrine were wont to call the latter the little World, and the former the great one. Now, though there is something very fanciful in their way of treating this Matter, yet the Notion in itself is very just, and whoever examines it carefully will find, that the general Laws of the Universe, are also the particular Laws of all the different Kind of Bodies in it; and hence it comes to pass, that as Man suffers and is destroyed for want of Moisture, so this is like to be the Case of the World too, or at least would be the Case, if it did not receive foreign Supplies; which the judicious Sir *Isaac Newton* supposes it does from the Tails of Comets, the

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Watery

watery Vapours of which, he imagises, communicate with our Atmosphere for that Purpose (p).

This we must allow to be a rational, and probable Account of what for many Ages puzzled the Understanding of all Mankind; and if so wonderful a Method as this is, be necessary to supply the Earth with Moisture, why should we think it strange, that a new, and in some Measure, unaccustomed Way, should be the fittest for repairing that Humidity, which is so necessary to the well-being of the human Body. The Universe is under the special Care and Direction of its infinite wise Creator, who at certain Seasons therefore has provided it with such requisite Supplies; but the Bodies of Men are in this respect left to their own Care, and if the Materials be within our own Reach, and our Faculties are strong enough to discover them, we have no more a Right to complain, that the Secret of preserving long Life is not discovered to us, than that the Art of baking Bread, of melting Ores, and refining Metals, or indeed any other Art, was not revealed to our Ancestors in the earliest Ages of the World, but left to be the Reward of their Industry and Sagacity. The Furniture of Man's Mind, and the Structure of his Body, are both of them such, that if he has any Reason to complain, it must be of himself; and his Reflections upon Providence are not only impious, but ridiculous. He has it absolutely in his Power to be easy, and happy if he pleases. Health will always attend on Temperance steadily pursued, as *Galen* asserts in his Works, and manifested in himself, by living to upwards of a hundred, without being attacked either by acute or chronic Diseases. Riches are not indeed within every Man's Reach, but there is something always at hand infinitely more valuable than Wealth, I mean Content. If to these Blessings we would

(p) *Philosoph. Natural. Princip. Mathem. lib. iii.*

add

add Length of Days, why, that, according to this Hypothesis, is in our Power, and depends on our finding out a proper Supply of the aerial Humidity before-mentioned.

We have now the Clue in our Hand, and nothing can hinder us from extricating ourselves from this Labyrinth of Doubts about the proper Method of obtaining this Supply, but our own Negligence and Want of Attention. We ought to remember that Heat and Moisture are, from the very Beginning, the Principles of human Life. Let us reflect then, and see if we cannot discover whence these Principles arise. There is, I think, very little Difficulty in this Case, that of Heat is derived from the Male, that of Moisture from the Female. It is equally unnecessary and unbecoming me to introduce a Treatise of Generation in a Work like this; it is sufficient that I put my Readers in mind, that the Enlargement of the Foetus in the Womb requires a very extraordinary Degree of Moisture in all Respects, and that this is entirely derived to it from its Mother. The Growth of an Infant is surprizingly quick, and this is owing to the Strength of the Vital Flame, the constant Supply of a proper Humidity, and the not being exposed to those Accidents which have been before-mentioned, I mean the Action of the circumambient Air, bodily Motion, and the Passions of the Mind; from all which, Children, while in the Womb, are in a great Measure free. This I think is so extremely clear and plain, that it is simply impossible for a Man to be in any Perplexity about it; and therefore I shall proceed to the next Stage of Life and enquire into the Method which is therein pursued by Nature.

In the State of Infaney, there is likewise an extraordinary Provision necessary of this humid Matter, not only sufficient for performing the ordinary Functions of animal Life, but also to facilitate the Growth of the Child,
and

and this too proceeds from the Mother. Nature has furnished her with Breasts, and with Milk, which is the most suitable Nutriment, that, under such Circumstances, the human Body can receive; and in extreme old Age, when the Body is a second Time reduced to the Feebleness of Infancy, Milk, and especially Womens Milk, is found to be of very great Use, and in consumptive Cases also, is allowed to be a most admirable Restorative. Hence I think it plainly appears, that the radical Moisture, so necessary to supply the Flame of Life, and to keep it not only alive, but vigorous and clear, is to be sought in Woman. I foresee one great Objection that may be made to this, *viz.* That I insist not on the Breath or Effluvia of Women, but of Virgins. Yet weigh the Cases thoroughly, and you will find all that I have advanced very consistent. The Nourishment of a Child in the Womb, and an Infant at the Breast, is a Nourishment no way fit for Persons in Years, and therefore I approve what *Bacon* delivers from the *Arabian* Physicians, *viz.* That Milk is an improper Diet for old Men. This hinders not its being useful, when People are quite worn out, for that may furnish Strength to a dying Flame, that would not advantage a Lamp in its ordinary Situation. Persons in the last Stage of Life are frequently emaciated, and, in this Case, Milk may help; but still there is a wide Difference between the natural and gradual Decay of the human Body, and what the Physicians call a Consumption; there must be consequently a Difference in their Cure. Thus from certain, and almost self-evident Principles, I have established the Reasonableness of this Proposition, that the Breath and insensible Perspiration of Virgins, in a young and healthy State, must be very salutary for old Men, and may very probably be a Means of protecting them from those Infirmities, which usually attend an advanced Age.

Now

Now, in respect to this, it matters not at all, whether the Inscription I set out with be founded in Truth or not, neither is it requisite to believe that I have hit exactly on the Method used by *Hermippus*. The single Point in Question is, whether I have shown that Sense, in which I take this Inscription, to be agreeable to the Dictates of Reason, and the Laws of Nature; and as to this every Reader must decide for himself. Before he does this, there is another Sort of Evidence that he ought to hear, and which, for the Sake of Truth, I shall readily produce.

There are two Sorts of People whose Interest it is particularly to decry this Doctrine, on a Supposition that it is destructive of their own, to which they are prodigiously, and perhaps unreasonably addicted: I mean the Astrologers and Hermetic Philosophers. I shall examine what both may object, rather for the Entertainment and Satisfaction, than for the Conviction of the wiser Part of the World, who are already well enough apprized of the Credit due to these Virtuosi; and when I have done this, I shall draw to a speedy Conclusion, from an Assurance that nothing more can be necessary to establish the Probability of this Method for preserving Health and Life, and for defending our Bodies from the Infirmities of old Age, as long as their Constitutions will permit.

The modern Patrons of Astrology, for such it seems there are, will probably pretend, that this Notion of *Hermippus* was a mere Fancy, and that if he really reached to an Age so advanced, it was not through the Assistance derived from the Breath of Virgins, but from the happy Position of the heavenly Bodies at the Time of his Birth. It is, however, lucky for me, that they can never make good this Objection, because I presume their Art will not furnish them with the Means of constructing any Scheme of his Nativity. I know they may
plead

plead the Authority of *Thomas Aquinas* (q), and other great Men who have given into these Opinions. I know too, that they may produce some extraordinary Instances of the Verification of astrological Predictions; particularly those of *Basil*, who was so famous at *Florence*, and of *La Brosse* at *Paris*, who were particularly happy in guessing at future Events, and in having their Predictions recorded by Historians of Credit.

The former of these foretold to *Cosmo de Medici*, then a private Citizen at *Florence*, that he would attain some very high Dignity, in as much as the Ascendent of his Nativity was adorned with the same propitious Aspects, as those of the Emperors *Augustus*, and *Charles V.* had been; and he was accordingly raised to the Dukedom of *Tuscany*, in the Month of *January* 1434 (r). The same *Greek Astrologer* did, with equal Capacity, foretel the Death of Prince *Alex. de Medici*, and this with such Confidence, as to paint out the Person by whose Hand he should die, and whom he affirmed to be that Prince's intimate and familiar Friend, of a slender habit of Body, a small Face, and swarthy Complexion, and who, with a reserved Silence, was almost insociable to all Persons in the Court; by which Description he did almost point out with the Finger *Laurenco de Medici*, who murder'd Prince *Alexander* in his Bed-chamber, contrary to all the Laws of Consanguinity and Hospitality, in the Year 1537 (s). But the great Misfortune is, that in those Days it was shrewdly suspected, that these pretended Sages had better and more certain Methods of penetrating into Conspiracies, than are afforded

(q) One strong Passage, among many in his Writings, runs thus. Qui sciret virtutes Caelorum & Stellarum, dum res aliqua nascitur, posset judicare de natura rei, licet hoc necessitatem non imponat, & posset impediti per accidens. D. Tho. Secundo de Generatione.

(r) *Dinotus, Memorab. lib. vi. p. 390.* (s) *Jovis. Eleg. p. 320.*

by astrological Means; and I must confess myself inclined to suspect from the very Manner in which this Prediction was delivered, that *Basil* was employed to caution Prince *Alexander* against his Cousin *Laurence*, and that, for want of Penetration, he fell into that Snare which he might otherwise have avoided.

The Instance of *La Brosse* is more to the Purpose, because better supported; indeed I think that it is the best attested Story of its Kind. The Baron *de Biron*, afterwards the famous Marshal of that Name, being under some Difficulty about a Duel, went to *La Brosse*, and carried him a Scheme of his Nativity, but told him it was that of a Friend of his; the Astrologer, having considered the Scheme, assured him, that the Person, whose Nativity it was, would infallibly be a great Man; nay, that he might even come to be a King, but for the *Caput Algol*, pointing to the Figure of the Dragon's Head in the Scheme. *M. de Biron*, who did not understand the Term, insisted on a clearer Account; why then, replied *La Brosse*, through a Desire of being a King, this Man will do something that will cost him his Head. Provoked at which Answer, the Baron beat him unmercifully; but he lived to fulfill his Prediction, having his Head cut off, as all the World knows, for a Conspiracy against *Henry IV.* (†).

How much soever these Sort of Notions have been discountenanced by the prevailing of Experimental Philosophy, and true Science; yet, where a Prince gives ear to his own Praises, there will never be wanting such as will adopt astrological Schemes, as well as other Things, to flatter his Vanity. Nothing is easier than to give such a Turn to a Piece of this Nature; Men of sprightly Parts know how to dress up the Face of Heaven upon such an Occasion, and to dispose properly of

(†) *Invent. Gen. de France*, par *M. de Serres*, p. 2051.

all the Signs and Planets, so as to raise mighty Expectations in the World, as well as the highest Pleasure in the Mind of the Prince they flatter.

Such were the favourable Influences of the celestial Orbs, at the Birth of the late *Lewis XIV.* King of *France*. The Genethliac System may be seen in one of the Medals that compose the History of that Reign. The Gentlemen of the Royal Academy of Inscriptions have observed the precise Position of the Planets, at the Moment of the Birth of that Prince; round about this curious Medal, one sees the twelve Signs of the *Zodiac*, forming the twelve Houses of this System; the seven Planets appear in the same Degrees they occupied at that Time; the Sun, which gives Perfection to the other Planets, is in the mid-Heaven; *Mars*, the Lord of the Ascendent, in reception with *Jupiter*, the Protector of Life, and this is what they call the greater Fortune; *Saturn*, the Enemy of Nature, is in his Dignities, which makes him less malevolent; the *Moon* is in conjunction with *Venus*; and *Mercury*, in his little House of Predilection, to ten Degrees of the Sun, out of Combustion, and, enlightened by his Rays, gives a Superiority of Genius in the most difficult and most important Enterprises, which his being in Quartile with *Mars*, is not capable to abate. The Nativity of *Lewis XIV.* was figured in the Middle of the Medal, by a rising Sun, the King is placed in the Chariot of that glorious Planet of which *Ovid* has given us the Description. This Chariot is drawn by four Horses, guided by *Victory*, the Inscription is in these Words, *Ortus Solis Gallici, The Rising of the Gallic Sun*; and the Exergue contains these other *Latin Words*, *Septembris quinto, minutis 38 ante Meridiem, 1638. The 5th of September, 38 Minutes before Noon, 1638.*

I must confess that this is a pretty Contrivance, and ingeniously put together ; yet I dare say, that none of the learned Gentlemen, concerned in framing this Medal, ventured to predict any of the Clouds that obscured their Sun. No, they were too great Courtiers for that. But if this famous Medal give any Reputation to Astrology, I shall venture to lay down a few Observations which will free my Doctrine from all Inconveniencies. I observe then, that as the happiest Nativities admit of natural Causes to co-operate in bringing about what they portend, so it is not at all improbable, that if by some happy Accident we could gain a Sight of the Horoscope of *Hermippus*, it would shew us, that *Mercury*, well posited at the Time of his Birth, and beheld by *Luna* with a favourable Aspect, caused his Discovery of this mighty Secret, and enabled him to make such a Use of the Breath of Virgins, that no Man ever thought of before. If the Astrologers are content to grant me this, I am willing to compromise the Matter, and, which I think is as much as they can expect, to allow this Doctrine to be derived from the Stars. But, if they are so tenacious of their own Notions, as not to accept of so fair an Offer, I shall recur to my first Principles, and deny absolutely the Certainty of their Art, and demand as good Reasons for the Credit of Astrology, as I have produced in favour of my own System, before I enter the Lists with them. Affirmation is nothing in this Age, wherein Men expect Proofs for every Thing. Let them shew us then, that they can predict an Earthquake, Whirlwind, or so much as an Irruption of Mount *Etna* ; nay, let them but mark the rainy, and fair Days for a whole Year in any Climate in *Europe*, and I will be content, that their Assertions weigh down my Evidence, and that the long Life of *Hermippus* shall be ascribed to a happy Conjunction of humid Stars, in

the Sign *Virgo*, which was the Interpretation once offered me by a learned Astrologer of this Inscription, and which, together with my own Sentiments, I freely submit to the Judgment of the impartial Reader.

Such as seek after Truth disguise nothing, and are so far from being afraid of seeing their Opinion canvassed, and even refuted, that on the contrary, nothing pleases them better, because they are still Gainers by the Dispute; since, when Truth is once discovered, they have as much Right to it as he who found it. In the present Case, if this Treatise of mine should stir up any wiser Man to look for a better Solution of the Problem I have stated, and he should luckily fall on the genuine Method of *Hermippus*, he could not rejoice at it more than I, nor would he find any one more willing to own, or applaud his Ingenuity. Let us read, let us meditate, let us dispute, but all for the sake of Truth, which is the great Property of Mankind, constitutes all our Happiness, and which it is therefore our common Interest to pursue. The Point I have now in view, is to discover the Means of prolonging Life, without feeling the Infirmities of Age; to the Discovery of which, if the Publication of this Treatise any way contribute, not my End only, but the End of Mankind is answered, and a most noble Point of Science will be illustrated, from what many might at first esteem an idle Dispute.

I shall not treat the Hermetic Philosophers altogether so briskly as I have done the Astrologers; because, without doubt, there have been amongst them, many very excellent Persons. I cannot take upon me to say when they began to lay claim to the Universal Medicine, by which they pretend to preverse Life for many Centuries at least, of which they say *Artephius* was an Instance, who lived by the Use of it to the Age of 300,

or,

or, as some say, near 1000. This is certain, that the Society of the *Rosicrucians* openly claimed it as one of the Privileges of their illustrious Body. *Peter Mormius*, who for ought I know, was one of the last of them that appeared in publick, reduced their high Pretensions, which at first were very extensive, to the Possession of three Secrets. Of these, the first was the Perpetual Motion; the second, the Art of transmuting Metals; and the third, the Universal Medicine. In the Book published by this *Mormius*, there are Abundance of curious Things, though he does not sufficiently explain himself, especially upon the last Subject (u). It is, however, well enough known, that these *Illuminati* asserted, that they had a Power of prolonging their Lives for many Ages; nor is it very clear from their Writings, whether, what they are pleased to call the Philosopher's Stone, be not at once the great Secret of Transmutation, and of the Universal Medicine.

The clearest Account of this Matter, that I have ever met with, is in the Answer of a *French Adept*, to Doctor *Edmund Dickenson*, Physician to King *Charles II.* and a profest Admirer of the Hermetic Philosophy. The Doctor's Letter is very plain and clear. He wrote to this Friend of his, in order to be thoroughly informed as to those Contrarieties, which he thought he had discerned in the Discourses of some of the Hermetic Sages: His Friend gives him a very plausible Answer to all his

(u) This *Mormius* went into Holland in the Year 1630; where he demanded an Audience of the States-General, in order to tender them certain Propositions from the Fraternity of the *Rosicrucians*, which they refused to hear; this did not, however, hinder *Mormius* from publishing a Treatise under the following Title, which is now become a scarce and valueable Book; *Arcana totius naturæ secretissima, nec hætenus unquam detecta, Collegio Rosiano in lucem produntur, Opera Petri Mormii, in 24. Lugduni Batavorum, 1630.*

Objecti-

Objections, and, to enforce the Belief of what he lays down, he puts the Doctor in mind of his having made Projection, that is, his having transmuted base Metals into Gold, more than once, before the Doctor, in the King's Laboratory in *Whitehall*; as to the Universal Medicine, and its Capacity of extending the Life of Man for many Ages, he positively asserts, that it is in the Hands of the *illuminated Brethren*, and gives many Reasons why they should be so extremely careful in concealing it. He goes so far as to insinuate, that it was in his own Possession (w). I must own, I am astonished at such Sort of Assertions, and more so, at some Relations well-attested that seem to favour the Truth of it.

There happened in the Year 1687, an odd Accident at *Venice*, that made very much Stir then, and which I think deserves to be secured from Oblivion. The great Freedom and Ease with which all Persons, who make a good Appearance, live in that City, is known sufficiently to all who are acquainted with it; they will not therefore be surprized, that a Stranger, who went by the Name of *Signor Gualdi*, and who made a considerable Figure there, was admitted into the best Company, though no body knew who, or what he was. He remained at *Venice* some Months; and three Things were remarked in his Conduct. The first was, that he had a small Collection of fine Pictures, which he readily shewed to any Body that desired it; the next, that he

(w) The Title of Dr. Dickenson's Book, referr'd to by our Author, is, *De quinta essentia Philosophorum*. It was printed at Oxford, in 1686, and a second Time in 1705. There is a third Edition of it printed in Germany, in 1721. The Author was one of those very great Men, whose Merits are better known abroad than at home; he is mentioned by the learned Olaus Borrichius, and many other foreign Writers, with much Respect, and just Testimonies of Esteem for his extensive Knowledge.

was perfectly versed in all Arts and Sciencies, and spoke on all Subjects with such Readiness and Sagacity, as astonished all who heard him; and it was in the third Place observed, that he never wrote or received any Letters, never desired any Credit, or made use of Bills of Exchange, but paid for every Thing in ready Money, and lived decently, though not in Splendor. This Gentleman met one Day at the Coffee-house with a *Venetian* Nobleman, who was an extraordinary good Judge of Pictures: He had heard of *Signor Gualdi's* Collection, and in a very polite Manner desired to see them, to which the other very readily consented. After the *Venetian* had viewed *Signor Gualdi's* Collection, and expressed his Satisfaction, by telling him that he had never seen a finer, considering the Number of Pieces of which it consisted, he cast his Eye by chance over the Chamber Door, where hung a Picture of this Stranger. The *Venetian* look'd upon it, and then upon him. This Picture was drawn for you, Sir, says he to *Signor Gualdi*, to which the other made no Answer, but by a low Bow. You look, continued the *Venetian*, like a Man of Fifty, and yet I know this Picture to be of the Hand of *Titian*, who has been dead one hundred and thirty Years, how is this possible? It is not easy, said *Signor Gualdi*, gravely, to know all Things that are possible; but there is certainly no Crime in my being like a Picture drawn by *Titian*. The *Venetian* easily perceived by his Manner of speaking, that he had given the Stranger Offence, and therefore took his leave. He could not forbear speaking of this in the Evening to some of his Friends, who resolved to satisfy themselves by looking upon the Picture the next Day. In order to have an Opportunity of doing so, they went to the Coffee-house about the Time that *Signor Gualdi* was wont to come thither, and not meeting with him; one of them who had often conversed

conversed with him, went to his Lodgings to enquire after him, where he heard, that he set out an Hour before for *Vienna*, This Affair made a great Noise, and found a Place in all the News-papers of that Time (x):

This Story agrees very well with what is said by Doctor *Dickenson's* Correspondent, who observes, that the Adepts are obliged to conceal themselves for the sake of Safety, and that having a Power, not only of prolonging their Lives, but also of renovating themselves, they take care to use it with the utmost Discretion, and instead of making a Display of this wonderful Prerogative, they manage it with the utmost Secrecy, which he lays down as the true Cause of the World's being in so much Doubt about the Matter. Hence it comes to pass, that though an Adept is possessed of greater Wealth than is contained in the Mines of *Peru*, yet he always lives in so moderate a Manner, as to avoid all Suspicion, and so as never to be discovered, unless by some unforeseen Accident, like that which happened to a famous *English* Artist, who disguised himself under the Name of *Eugenius Philalethes*, and whose true Name is said to be *Thomas Vaughan*, the clearest and most candid Writer of all the Hermetic Philosophers (y). He tells us of himself, that going to a Goldsmith, in order to sell twelve hundred Marks of fine Silver, the Man told him at first Sight, that it never came out of the Mines, but was the Product of Art, as not being of the Standard of any Nation whatever; which surprized *Philalethes* so much, that he withdrew immediately, and left the Goldsmith in Possession of his Treasure. This famous Man, who

(x) *Memoires Historiques*, 1687, Tom i. p. 365. (y) The most famous of his Pieces is intitled, *Introitus appertus ad ocellum Regis Palatium*. This was written originally in English, has been translated into almost all the European Languages, and is unquestionably the best and clearest Book upon the Subject that is extant in any Tongue.

certainly was an Adept, if ever there was one, led a wandering kind of Life, and fell often into great Dangers, merely from his possessing this great Secret. He was born, as we learn from his Writings, about the Year 1612, and what is the strangest Part of his History, he is believed, by those of his Fraternity, to be yet living; and a Person of great Credit at *Nuremberg*, affirms, that he conversed with him but a few Years ago. Nay, it is further asserted by all the Lovers of Hermetic Philosophy, that this very *Philalethes*, is the President of the *illuminated* in *Europe*, and that he constantly sits as such in all their annual Meetings. It is on the one hand true, that there is something wild and incredible in these Relations, and yet it is certain on the other, that several, who attest them, are Persons of irreproachable Characters; and even with Respect to this *Philalethes*, he was, according to the Report of the great *Boyle*, and others who knew him, a Man of remarkable Piety, and of unstained Morals. In the *English* Plantations, he became acquainted with one *Starkey*, a Chymist, before whom he made Projection, but finding that *Starkey* was a vicious and extravagant Man, he broke off his Acquaintance with him, without communicating any Part of his Secrets (z).

But it may be said, by such as look upon this whole Affair as an idle and ridiculous Thing, and who consider all these Relations, however attested, or supported, as mere Dreams, or Visions; I say it may be alledged by these angry Criticks, that it is a direct Proof of the Falshood of their Pretensions to long Life; that we have distinct

(z) This George Starkey was originally an Apothecary, had Head turned to Chymistry, but managed his Affairs so ill, that he was obliged to transport himself to the Plantations, where he became acquainted with *Philalethes*, of which Acquaintance he boasts much in his Writings. In 1658 he published a Book of Chymistry at London, which was translated into French in 1706, and into High Dutch, in 1712.

Accounts

Accounts of the Time when their most celebrated Patriarchs, such as *Roger Bacon*, *Raymon Lully*, and *Basil Valentine* died, and were buried. If therefore, these Men could not preserve their own Lives, or even protract them beyond the ordinary Extent, what Probability is there, will the People say, that any of the Fraternity should prolong their Lives in the Manner they relate? In answer to this, the Adepts always insinuate, that if these great Men died, it was by their own Choice, and that many of their Fraternity still decline that Length of Life their Art would enable them to enjoy. This I must confess, is an unsatisfactory Answer, especially to such as make the Objection, but then say the Adepts, it is the only Answer that becomes us to give; we do not aim at the Conviction of these Sort of People, we are not desirous of making a Noise in the World, we do not even regard the Possession of Riches and long Life as Blessings in themselves further than that they enable us to do good; and the sole Reason of our ever mentioning such Secrets being in our Possession, is in Order to lead to our Society such worthy Persons as deserved to be associated. Now, however weak, however sophistical; this reasoning may appear to the Generality of Mankind, yet, upon the Principles of the Hermetic Philosophy, it must be allowed to be extremely plausible, and in all such Cases, we must admit Men to argue from their own Principles, and not from those we lay down.

As I do not profess myself either an Adept, or so much as a Student in this Sort of Philosophy, I shall take the Liberty, as the Matter of Fact nearly concerns the Subject of which I am treating, to shape out another Answer to this Objection, and it is this, that perhaps we are not always so secure as to the Deaths of these Virtuosi, as we imagine. The Continuance of their
Lives

Lives is a Thing, that though they boast of in one Sense, yet in another they studiously affect to conceal. Of this I shall give an extraordinary Instance, which will be so much the more entertaining to the Reader, as, for any thing I know, it has not yet been taken notice of by any Writer upon this Subject, not even by the professed Historian of this Fraternity, notwithstanding he has made larger Collections concerning them and their Philosophy, than any Man that ever set Pen to Paper. This Instance will be also found the more extraordinary, since I take it from one who never pretended to be an Adept, and who, therefore, ought to be considered as an unprejudiced Witness. But before I enter upon this Story, I must desire my Readers to observe, that I lay down Facts barely as I find them, and do not pretend to interest myself in the least, as to the Credit they may meet with.

Amongst the Hermetic Philosophers, who were allowed to have attained the highest Secrets of Science, *Nicholas Flamel* of *Paris* has been always reckoned one of the most considerable, and his Right to this Reputation the least to be contested. The History of this *Flamel*, who flourished in the XIV. Century is very curious : He was a Person of a good Family, though much reduced in point of Fortune ; had quick Parts, a lively Wit, and with the Advantage of no more than ordinary Education, was sent to *Paris* to get a Living as he could. *Flamel* wrote an extraordinary good Hand, had some Notions of Poetry, and painted very prettily ; yet all these Accomplishments raised him no higher than a Hackney Clerk, in which Condition he worked very hard, and had much ado to pick up a Subsistence. In 1357, Chance threw in his Way a Book of Hermetic Philosophy, written by one *Abraham a Jew*, or rather engraven on Leaves made of the Bark of Trees, and illustrated

with very curious Pictures, in which the whole Secret was laid down in the clearest Manner possible, to such as were acquainted with Hermetic Philosophy. This Treasure cost *Flamel* no more than two Florins, for the Person who sold him the Book knew nothing of what it contained, and *Flamel* himself, though he made it his whole Study for twenty Years, and tho' he took the Precaution of copying the Pictures, and hanging them up in his House, and asking the learned their Opinion about them, was able to make very little of them (a).

Tired at length with so vain and so laborious a Study, he, in 1378, took a Resolution to travel into *Spain*, in hopes of meeting there with some learned *Jew*, who might give him the Key to the Grand Secret; that this Journey might not appear to be undertaken on quite so chimerical a Motive, he made a Vow to go in Pilgrimage to St. *James of Compostella*, a Practice frequent in those Times. After much Search to little Purpose, he met at last with a *Jew* Physician at *Leon*, who had been lately converted to the Christian Religion, and who was well versed in this Kind of Science; this Man, at the Persuasion of *Flamel*, consented to go with him to *Paris*; but when they were got as far as *Orleans*, the Physician, who was far in Years, and little accustomed to the Fatigue of Travel, fell sick of a Fever, which carried him off in a few Days (b).

Flamel

(a) The best Part of this Account of Nicholas *Flamel* is taken from his Article in a very curious Book, which, as it deserves to be more known than it is, encourages me to set down the Title thereof at large, which runs thus. *Tresor des Recherches & Antiquitez Gauloises, reduites en ordre alphabetique, & enriches de beaucoup d'Origines, Epitaphes, & autre choses rares & curieuses, comme aussi de beaucoup de Mots de la langue Thyoise, ou Theuthfranque.* Paris, 1655. in 4to. (b) As the History of *Flamel* was collected long after his Death, it is very possible that there might be some Mistakes committed in relation to the Circumstances attending his Adventures; but there is one Thing which, I think

Flamel, having rendered the last kind Offices to his dying Friend, returned very disconsolate to *Paris*, where he studied three years more, according to the Instructions he had received from the Physician, with such Success, that on the 17th of *January*, 1382, he made Projection on a large Quantity of Mercury, which he changed into fine Silver, and, on the 25th of *April* following, he transmuted a vast Quantity of Mercury into Gold. He afterwards repeated frequently the Experiment, and acquired thereby immense Wealth. He and his Wife *Perrenella*, in the Midst of all these Riches, lived still in their old sober Way, and eat and drank, as usual, out of earthen Vessels. They maintained however a vast Number of Poor, founded fourteen Hospitals, built three Chapels, and repaired and endowed seven Churches. In short, the Acts of Charity they did were so astonishing, that *Charles* the VII. who was then upon the Throne, resolved to enquire how they came by their Wealth, and sent for that Purpose *M. de Cramoisi*, Master of Requests, and a Magistrate of the highest Reputation for Probity and Honour, to examine into their Circumstances; to whom *Flamel* gave so satisfactory an Answer, that no further Enquiry was made about them; but the honest old People were left in Possession of the only Privilege they desired, which was no greater, than that of doing all the good that lay in their Power (c).

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think, proves the Reality of the Story beyond Dispute, which is, that this very Book of Abraham the Jew, with the Annotations of *Flamel*, who wrote from the Instructions he received from this Physician, was actually in the Hands of Cardinal Richelieu, as *Borel* was told by the Count de Cabrines, who saw and examined it. (c) This too is a Fact out of Dispute, and as a Proof that *Flamel* drew his Riches from his Acquaintance with the Hermetic Philosophy, the Hieroglyphic Pictures upon his Tomb are usually, and I think very justly cited, as well as the Treatises he wrote upon this Subject,

par-

The Circumstances of this Story, the immense Wealth of *Flamel*, and his Wife, their many Foundations, their vast Endowments, and the prodigious Estate they left behind them, are all Facts so well attested, that no Dispute can be raised about them; or if they were, the last Will of *Nicholas Flamel*, which, with forty authentic Acts of as many charitable Foundations, that are laid up in the Archives of the Parish Church of St. *James*, in the Butchery at *Paris*, are Proofs capable of convincing the greatest Infidel. This *Flamel* wrote several Treatises on the Art of Chymistry; but they are extremely obscure, because they are all delivered in an allegorical Way, and consequently one may hit upon various Interpretations, without coming at the true one; which, it is said, he gave to a Nephew of his, and that the Secret remained long in the Family, nay it is owing to Indiscretion, if it does not so still (*d*). I must not, however, conceal an Attempt that has been made to overturn the whole of this History, not by denying the Facts, for that would have been ridiculous, since there are hundreds of Poor that yet subsist on *Flamel's* and his Wife's Foundations, and are consequently so many living Witnesses of the Veracity of that Part of the Relation.

But the Thing attempted is to give another Account of *Flamel's* acquiring his Wealth, and in order to this they tell you, that he was a Notary Publick, at the Time the *Jews* were expelled *France*, that they deposit-

particularly the following Work of his, *La grand Ecclaircissement de la Pierre philosophale, pour la Transmutation de tous Metaux*, par *Nicholas Flamel*, in 8vo *Paris* 1628.

(*d*) *Flamel* left his Secret to the Family of *Du Perrier*, the last of which was a Physician of that Name, amongst whose Papers it was found, I mean only Part of the Powder, by one *Du Bois*; who having acted very imprudently, in making Projection before several Persons, and pretending to much greater Knowledge than he really had, brought upon himself an unfortunat: End, being hang-
ed by order of Cardinal *Richelieu*.

ed with him in Trust, a great Part of their Wealth; and that he kept it for his own Use (e). Such as treat all that is said of the Philosopher's Stone and of Hermetic Philosophy, as a Fable, have run away with this Explication as if it had been a clear and satisfactory Account of the Matter, without considering that it is in Truth attended with greater Difficulties, than the Tale of the Transmutation. For what Probability is there, that Persons of so much Worth and Piety, as *Flamel* and his Wife are allowed to have been, should be guilty of such a flagrant Act of Injustice, as to betray the Trust reposed in them, and this purely to do Acts of Charity? If indeed they had lived in luxurious Plenty, and had riot-ed in all the Pleasures which their immense Wealth might have enabled them to have indulged, the Story might have deserved some Credit; but to imagine that two sober People, leading a Life of the utmost Frugality, and expending all their Revenues for pious and charitable Purposes, should contrive to get the Money so spent, by base and fraudulent Means, is utterly incredible. Besides, if this had been the Case, it is impossible to account for two Circumstances; the first is, that the King of *France* should be satisfied with the Account that *Flamel* thought fit to give to *Cramosfi*; the other, that this Story should never break out during the Life of *Flamel*, nor within an Age after his Death: But as I know there are People, who, to avoid being suspected of Credulity, will swallow any Thing opposite to what they think it would be a

(e) This Story, as far as I am able to learn, was first ushered into the World by Gabriel Naudé, a warm and angry Writer, and one far from being exact; from him it is copied by George Hor-nius, in his Preface to the Works of Geber, and by many other Writers. But as to the Notoriety of the Fact, with respect to the Banishment of the Jews, as all the French Historians agree in it, and in the Dates relating to it, one may safely conclude, that it is fully answered.

Shame

Shame to believe, I shall destroy this critical History of *Flamel's* Riches by an Argument, even that these People dare not discredit. In short, the *Jews* have been twice expelled *France*, first in 1180, long before *Flamel* was born, and again in 1406, several Years after all his Endowments were made, and but seven Years before the Death of him and his Wife *Perrenella* (f).

But methinks I hear some captious Reader cry out, what did *Flamel* and *Perrenella* die? To what end then all this tedious Story? What is there in *Flamel's* Life that corresponds with that of *Hermippus*? Or what has Alchemy to do with the Breath of Virgins, or the Prolongation of human Life? Peace a little; I promised you some Account of *Flamel*, that has not been hitherto regarded, that has escaped the Notice of all who have written the History of Hermetic Philosophers, from the noble *Olaus Borrichius*, down to the Abbe de *Frenfoy*, and this I am going to give you. But, permit me to observe, first, that my Account is taken from the Travels of the Sieur *Paul Lucas*, who by order of *Lewis XIV.* passed through *Greece*, *Asia Minor*, *Macedonia*, and *Africa*, in search of Antiquities, who dedicated this Book of his to that Prince, and who must be therefore presumed to relate what was true, or what he took to be true; for no Body, who knew the Character of *Lewis XIV.* can imagine, that he would suffer a Fellow to usher in his Fallshoods into the World, under the Sanction of his Name; much less that after being guilty of such a Piece of Insolence, he should encourage, protect, and employ such a Man, as in Fact he did to the very end of his Reign; and this in Consequence of the Reputation he acquired from the

(f) If the Reader has a-mind to be better acquainted with the Adventures of this Adept, he may consult the History of Hermetic Philosophy, published lately by the Abbe Lenglet du Fresnoy.

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Publication of the Voyages, the Authority of which I am going to use (*g*).

It may not be amiss to put my Reader in mind, that I have strictly kept my word. The *Sieur Lucas* was no Hermetic Philosopher, no Chymist, no deep Student in the Sciences, and, if we guess from his Writings, no Man of Art, or Address, but a bold, rough, free-spoken Traveller, who had seen much, and was willing to tell the World all he had seen. If from hence any should be led into an Opinion that he was a credulous Man, and might be easily imposed on, I have nothing to say to that; I do not intend to turn Advocate for the Solidity of a Traveller's Understanding, any more than for the Truth of Hermetic Philosophy. I only lay down Things as they are, or at least as they appear to be, and leave all the rest to the Readers Decision. All I insist upon as to the *Sieur Lucas's* Relation, is this, that he could not be deceived as to the Matter of Fact; he could not dream the Story he has told us; he could not see it in a Vision; and as to the rest, I do not concern myself about it; he might possibly be cheated by the *Mohammedan* Monks; for I can readily conceive, that Monks of all Religions, are the same; and yet, if as great Absurdities, and much greater Difficulties attend the Story in this Light, than in any other, I presume it may justify a Hint, that it is not impossible it might be, otherwise than such severe Critics may incline to believe. But it is now time to come to the Story, and therefore I shall put an end to my Reflections.

He informs us, that being at *Broussa*, in *Natolia*, and going to take the Air towards a little Village called *Bour-*

(*g*) See the Preface to the Book from which this Story is taken, which is entituled *Voyage de Sieur Paul Lucas, fait par ordre du Roi, dans la Grece, &c.* Amsterdam, 1714, in 12mo; two Vols.

nous Bachy, at a small Distance from thence, in Company with a Person of Distinction, he met with the following Adventure, which I shall relate to you exactly in his own Words. We went together to a little Mosque, says he, where one of their most eminent Dervises was interred. It is always a Dervise that has the Custody of such Places, which are, generally speaking, pleasantly situated, adorned with Gardens and Fountains, and, on that Account, set a-part for public Walks, and Places for Recreation. We were quickly introduced into a little Cloister, where we found four Dervises, who received us with all imaginable Civility, and desired us to partake of what they were eating; we were told, what we soon found to be very true, that they were all Persons of the greatest Worth and Learning. One of them, who said he was of the Country of the *Usbecks*, (a Tribe of *Tartars*) appeared to me more learned than the rest, and I believe verily he spoke all the Languages in the World. As he did not know me to be a *Frenchman*, after we had conversed some Time in the *Turkish* Languages, he asked me, if I could speak *Latin*, *Spanish*, or *Italian*. I told him, that, if he pleased, he might talk to me in *Italian*; but as he soon discovered by my Accent, that it was not my Mother Tongue, he asked me frankly, what Country I came from. As soon as he knew that I was a Native of *France*, he spoke to me in as good *French*, as if he had been brought up at *Paris*. How long Sir, said I, did you stay in *France*? He answered me, that he had never been there, but that he had a great Inclination to undertake the Journey.

I did all that lay in my Power to strenghten that Resolution, and persuade him to it: In order to which, I told him, that there was no Kingdom in the World more polished; that Strangers especially were extremely well

receiv-

received there, and that, without Question, he would receive the greatest Satisfaction from this Journey. No, no, returned he, I am not in such a Hurry to make it, I should be a Fool to flatter myself with any such Hopes; I am one of the Sages, and I know that is enough to hinder me from enjoying Quiet there, so that I am not like to think any more of the Matter. I took a great deal of Pains to convince him, that he was deceived, that some bad People had given him ill Impressions of my Country; that *France*, on the contrary, was the very Nursery of the Learned, and that the King, whose Subject I had the Honour to be, was the greatest Patron of the Sciences. I went further still, I told him, that tho' I had not the Honour to be of any learned Profession myself, yet his Majesty was pleased to defray the Expences of the Travels in which he saw me engaged, and this with no other View than to procure Notices of those Things, the Knowledge of which remained yet necessary for perfecting the Sciences; such as of Herbs that might be useful in Physic; ancient Monuments that might contribute to the Illustration of remarkable Events, and consequently serve to render History more complete; the View of the Countries themselves in order to the rectifying geographical Charts; in fine, I run through all the Proofs I could think of, in order to convince him of the Inclination that prevailed in *France*, in favour of the Sciences, and of Learning; all which he attributed to the Climate, and seemed to approve of what I said, out of pure Civility. At last, however, he seem'd to be ravished with the fine Things I told him, and went so far as to assure me, that some Time or other he would certainly go thither. Our Conversation being ended, the Dervises carried us to their House, which was at the Bottom of the Mountain, very near *Bournous Bachy*, where, having drank Coffee, I took my leave of them, but with

a Promise, however, that I would come and see them again.

On the 10th, the Dervise, whom I took for an *Usbec*, came to pay me a Visit. I received him in the best Manner possible, and as he appeared to me a very learned, as well as curious Man, I shewed him all the Manuscripts I had bought, and he assured me they were very valuable, and written by great Authors : I must say, in favour of this Dervise, that he was a Person every way extraordinary, even to his outward Appearance. He shewed me Abundance of curious Things in Physic, and promised me more ; but, at the same Time, he could not help saying, that it was necessary that I should make some extraordinary Preparations on my Side, in order to put myself into a Condition of profiting by the Lights he was able to give me. To judge according to his Appearance, he should have been a Man about thirty ; but by his Discourse, he seemed to have lived at least a Century ; and of this I was the more persuaded from the Accounts he gave me of some long Voyages he had made.

He told me, that he was one of seven Friends, who all wander'd up and down the World with the same View of perfecting themselves in their Studies, and that, at parting, they always appointed another Meeting at the End of twenty Years, in a certain City which was mentioned, and that the first who came waited for the rest. I perceived, without his telling me, that *Broussa* was the City appointed for their present Meeting. There were four of them there already, and they appeared to converse with each other, with a Freedom that spoke rather an old Acquaintance, than accidental Meeting. In a long Conversation with a Man of great Parts, it is natural to run over Abundance of curious Topics. Religion and natural Philosophy took up our Thoughts by Turns,

Turns, and at last we fell upon Chemistry, Alchymy, and the Cabala ; I told him, that all these, and especially the Notion of the Philosophers Stone, were now regarded by most Men of Sense, as mere Fictions and Chimeras. That, returned he, ought not to surprize you, for in the first Place, we ought to suffer nothing to astonish us in this Life ; the true Sage hears all Things, without being scandalized at them ; but though he may have so much Complaisance, as not to shock an ignorant Person when he talks of these Things, yet is he obliged, do you think, to sink his Understanding to a Level with vulgar Minds, because they are not able to raise their Thoughts to an Equality with his ? When I speak of a Sage, said he, I mean that Kind of Man to whom alone the Title of Philosopher properly belongs. He has no Sort of Tie to the World, he sees all Things die and revive without Concern ; he has more Riches in his Power than the greatest of Kings, but he tramples them under his Feet, and this generous Contempt sets him, even in the midst of Indigence, above the Power of Events.

Here I stop'd him. With all these fine Maxims, said I, the Sage dies as well as other People. What imports it therefore to me, to have been either a Fool, or a Philosopher, if Wisdom hath no Perogative over Folly, and one is no more a Shield against Death, than the other ? Alas ! said he, I perceive you are absolutely unacquainted with sublime Science, and have never known true Philosophy. Learn from me, my Friend, such a one as I have described dies indeed, for Death is a Debt which Nature exacts, and from which therefore no Man can be exempt ; but then he dies not before the Time fix'd by his great Creator. But then you must observe, that this Period approaches near a thousand Years, and to the Extent of that Time a Sage may live. He arrives at this, through the Knowledge he has of the true Medicine.

cine. By this Means he is able to ward off whatever may impeach, or hinder, the Animal Functions, or destroy the Temperature of his Nature ; by this he is enabled to acquire the Knowledge of whatever God has left within the Cognizance of Man : The first Man knew them by his Reason ; but it was this same Reason that blotted them again from his Mind ; for having attained to this Kind of natural Knowledge, he began to mingle therewith his own Notions and Ideas. By this Confusion, which was the Effects of a foolish Curiosity, he rendered imperfect even the Work of his Creator ; and this Error it is that the Sage labours to redress. The rest of Animals act only by their Instinct, by which they preserve themselves, as at their first Institution, and live as long now, as when the World first began. Man is yet a great deal more perfect ; but has he still preserved that Prerogative we mentioned, or has he not lost long ago the glorious Privilege of living a thousand Years, which, with so much Care, he should have studied to preserve ? This then it is, that the true Sages have retrieved ; and, that you may no more be led into Mistakes, let me assure you, that this is the Philosophers Stone, which is not a chimerical Science, as some half-read People fancy, but a Thing solid and sound. On the other hand, it is certainly known but to a few, and indeed it is impossible it should be known to most Part of Mankind, whom Avarice or Debauch destroy, or, whom an impetuous Desire of Life kills.

Surprized at all I heard ; And would you then persuade me, said I, that all who have possessed the Philosophers Stone, have likewise lived a thousand Years ? Without doubt, returned he gravely, for whenever God has been pleased to favour any Mortal with that Blessing, it depends entirely on himself to reach the Age of a thousand Years ; as in his State of Innocence the first Man might have

have done. I told him, that there had been in our Country some of those happy Mortals that were said to have possessed this Life-giving Stone, and yet had never extended their Days to such a Length, as to go with Decrepitness, that must attend such an excessive Age, into another State : But, continued he, don't you know that the Appellation of a Philosopher is much prostituted ; let me tell you once again, there is none properly such, but those who live to the Age I have mentioned. At last I took the Liberty to mention the illustrious *Flamel*, who, I said, had possessed the Philosophers Stone, but was dead to all Intents and Purposes for all that. At the Mention of his Name he smiled at my Simplicity. As I had by this Time begun to yield some Degree of Credit to his Discourse, I was surprized he should make a Doubt of what I advanced upon this Head. The Der-vise observed this, and could not help saying, with an Air of Mirth, and do you really think the Thing so ? Do you actually believe *Flamel* is dead ? No, no, my Friend, continued he, don't deceive yourself, *Flamel* is living still, neither he nor his Wife are yet at all acquainted with the dead ; it is not above three Years ago, since I left both the one and the other in the *Indies*, and he is, said he, one of my best Friends : Upon which he was going to tell me how their Acquaintance grew, but stopping himself short of a sudden, that, said he, is little to the Purpose, I will rather give you his true History, with respect to which, in your Country, I dare say, you are not very well acquainted.

We Sages, continued he, though rare in the World, yet are we equally of all Sects and Professions ; neither is there any great Inequality amongst us on that Account. A little before the Time of *Flamel*, there was a Jew of our Fraternity ; but as through his whole Life he had a most ardent Affection for his Family, he could

not

not help desiring to see them, after he once came to the Knowledge of their being settled in *France*. We foresaw the Danger of the Thing, and did all that in us lay to divert him from this Journey, in which we often succeeded. At last, however, the Passion of seeing his Family grew so strong upon him, that go he would; but, at the Time of his Departure, he made a solemn Promise to return to us as soon as it was possible. In a Word, he arrived at *Paris*, which was, as it is now, the Capital of the Kingdom, and found there, his Father's Descendents were in the highest Esteem among the *Jews*. Amongst others there was a *Rabbi* who had a Genius for the true Philosophy, and who had been long in Search of the great Secret. Our Friend did not hesitate at making himself known to his Relation; on the contrary, he entered into a strict Friendship with him, and gave him Abundance of Lights. But, as the first Matter is a long Time preparing, he contented himself with putting into Writing, the whole Series of the Process, and to convince his Nephew that he had not amused him with Fallhoods, he made Projection in his Presence on thirty *Ocques* (*an Ocque is three Pounds*) of base Metal, and turned it into pure Gold. The *Rabbi*, full of Admiration, did all he could to persuade our Brother to remain with him, but in vain; because he, on the other hand, was resolved not to break his Word with us. The *Jew*, when he found this, changed his Affection to mortal Hatred, and his Avarice stifling all Principles of Nature and Religion, he resolved to extinguish one of the Lights of the Universe. Dissembling, however, his black Designs, he besought the Sage, in the tenderest Manner, to remain with him only for a few Days. During this Space, he plotted and executed his execrable Purpose, murdered our Brother, and made himself Master of his Medicine. Such horrible Actions never

never remain long unpunished. Some other black Things he had done came to light, for which the *Jew* was thrown into Prison, convicted, and burnt alive.

The *Jew* fell soon after under a Persecution at *Paris*, as without doubt you have heard. *Flamel* more reasonable than the rest of his Countrymen, entered into a strict Friendship with some of them; and as his great Honesty, and unblemished Probity were well known, a *Jew* Merchant entrusted him with all his Books and Papers, among which were those of the *Jew* which had been burnt, and the Book that our Brother had left with him. The Merchant taken up no doubt with his own Affairs, and with the Care of his Trade, had never considered this valuable Piece with any Attention; but *Flamel*, whose Curiosity led him to examine it more closely, perceiving several Pictures of Furnaces and Alembicks, and other Vessels, he began immediately to apprehend, that in this Book was contained the grand Secret. He got the first Leaf of the Book, which was in *Hebrew*, translated, and, with the little he met with therein, was confirmed in his Opinion; but knowing that the Affair required Prudence and Circumspection, he took, in order to avoid all Discovery, the following Steps. he went into *Spain*, and as *Jews* were every where settled throughout that Country, in every Place that he came to, he applied himself to the most learned, engaging each of them to translate a Page of his Book: Having thus obtained an entire Version, he set out again for *Paris*. He brought back with him a faithful Friend of his, to labour with him in the Work, and with whom he intended to share the Secret; but a raging Fever carried him off, and deprived *Flamel* of his Associate (*b*).

When

(*b*) The Reader will easily perceive, that there are some Variations in this History from that which we have before given of *Flamel*; but this only shews, that we have not done any Thing to

When, therefore, he came home, he and his Wife entered together upon the Work, and, arriving in process of Time at the Secret, acquired immense Riches, which they employed in building public Edifices, and doing good to a Multitude of People.

Fame is frequently a very dangerous Evil; but a true Sage knows how to extricate himself from all kinds of Peril. *Flamel* saw plainly, that the prevailing Notion of his having the Philosopher's Stone might be fatal both to his Liberty and Life; he therefore bent all his Thoughts to the contriving some Method for extricating himself out of this Danger, and having at last struck out one, he took care to execute it immediately, and found Means to secure their Flight, by spreading a Report of his Wife's Death, and his own. By his Advice, she feigned herself sick of a Distemper, which had its usual Course, so that, by the Time she was said to die, she had reached the Frontiers of *Switzerland*, where he had directed her to wait for him. They buried in her stead a Wooden Image dress'd up, and that nothing might be wanting to the Ceremonial, it was interred in one of the Churches that they had founded. Some time after, he had recourse to the like Stratagem for his own Security, and having buried another Wooden Statue, he, by that Time the Funeral was over, joined his Wife. You will easily perceive that there was no great Difficulty in all

to countenance this Tale, or to give it that Air of Probability which in Truth it wants; and after all, the Difference between these Accounts is very far from being so great, as to destroy the Credit of either of them. For it is very probable, that *Lucas's* Memory might betray him, and that he might refresh it, on his Return into France from the common Story of *Flamel*, with which his agrees. The principal Reason of my citing it was, his Conclusion, which I particularly recommend to the Reader's Consideration; since, if *Flamel's* Story be known in those Parts of the World, with such a Degree of Exactness, it is little less wonderful than the rest of the Story in all Circumstances.

this

this since, in every Country, if a Man has Money, Physicians and Priests are always at his Service, ready to say or do whatever he directs them. To give the Thing still the better Grace, and to prevent the least Suspicion of the Cheat, *Flamel* made his last Will and Testament in Form, wherein he particularly desired that his Corps might be interr'd near that of his dear Wife, and that a Pyramid should be erected to their Memories. Since that Time, both of them have led a Philosophic Life, sometimes in one Country, sometimes in another. This, depend upon it, is the true History of *Flamel* and his Wife, and not that which you have heard at *Paris*, where there are very few who have ever had the least Glympe of true Wisdom.

This Story appeared to me what I think it must appear to every one, equally singular and strange, and the more so, as it was told me by *Mohammedan*, who, I have all the Reason in the World to believe, never set one Foot in *France*. As to the rest, I report this Matter purely as an Historian, and I have even passed by Abundance of Circumstances more remarkable than any I have related; the Truth of which however he affirmed. I shall content myself therefore with saying, that we are apt to entertain too mean Notions of the Learning of the *Mohammedans*, for certainly this Man was a Person in all Respects of extensive Knowledge, and a superior Genius (i).

We have now done with the History of *Flamel*, and if the Reader has a-mind to know how I bring it to have any Connection with my Subject, I shall inform him, in very few Words. According to my Sentiments, which are in Part founded upon the Writings of *Flamel* himself, the first Matter of the universal Medicine, the Philosophers Stone, or the Grand Secret of the Hermetic Philosophers, is taken from the Air; and from

(i) Voyage du Lucas, Tom. 1. p. 79---90.

some of their Writings I have gathered, that they were not altogether unacquainted with the Secret of *Hermippus*; so that if this Inscription had fallen into their Hands, I make no question but they would have pronounced him an Adept, and have supported this Decision of theirs, by giving us an Account, in their Manner, of his Method of performing it (*k*).

This Account, so far as I have been able to collect it, the Reader shall receive in the clearest Terms, for I pretend not to adopt their Manner of Writing, or to hide in ambiguous Allegories so useful a Truth.

In some Books, written by these Sort of Philosophers, I have met with various Experiments for applying the the salubrious Particles of the human Breath to medicinal Purposes; and, amongst these, the following seems to be that which best deserves Notice, as it shews a wonderful Ingenuity, and is, I believe, the single Attempt that was ever made to extract the Tinctures of living Animals, in order to make them enter, like other Tinctures, into all the Uses of Physic. “ Let there be, “ says my Author, a small close Room prepared, and “ let there be set up in it five little Beds, each for a “ single Person. In these Beds let there lie five Vir- “ gins under the Age of thirteen, and of wholesome “ Constitutions. Then in the Spring of the Year, a- “ bout the Beginning of the Month of *May*, let there “ be a Hole pierced through the Wall of the Chamber, “ through which let there be inserted the Neck of a “ Matrafs, the Body of the Glafs being exposed to the

(*k*) This Discovery will be pretty evident to any Reader who consults the fourth, ninth, and twelfth Pages of a Treatise at the End of Mangetus's *Bibliotheca Chemica*, which Piece is entituled *Mutus Liber*, in quo tamen tota Philosophia Hermetica figuris hieroglyphicis depingitur, ter optimo maximo Deo misericordie consecratus, solisque filiis artis dedicatus auctore, cujus nomen est *Altus*.

“ cold

" cold Air without. It is easy to apprehend, that when
 " the Room it filled with the Breath and Matter perspi-
 " red by these Virgins, the Vapours will continually
 " pass through the Neck of the Matraass into the Body
 " of the Vessel, where, through the Coldness of the cir-
 " cumsambient Air, they would be condensed into a
 " clear Water, which is a Tincture of admirable Efficacy,
 " and may be justly stiled an *Elixir Vitæ*, since a
 " few Drops of it, given in the Beginning of any acute
 " Distemper, resolves and disperses the morbid Matter,
 " so as to enable the animal Force to throw it off by
 " insensible Perspiration (1)."

I could mention another Preparation from the vital Part of the Air itself, which is a great Secret amongst these Philosophers, and is perhaps the *White Dove*, often mentioned in the Writings of *Philalethes*, of which thus much is certain, that when the Air is once spoiled of this Principle, it is no longer fit for animal Respiration, and it was by a Contrivance of this Kind, that the famous *Cornelius Drebell* made that Liquor, which supplied the Place of Air in the Machine he contrived for carrying on a Kind of submarine Navigation. This Medicine, which is, as I have said, extracted from the Air, is whiter than Snow, colder than Ice, and so volatile, that if the Quantity of a Nutmeg be exposed to the Air, it is ascribed thereby in the Space of a few Seconds. This Secret, which is used for the same Purposes as the former, is stiled *Aura Puellarum* (m). We may gather from

(1) Secreti di diversi eccellentissimi Huomini, in 8vo. Milano, 558. See also Lana. de mot. transpirat. lib. ii. cap. 3. artific. ii. p. 73, 74.

(m) Whoever consults the *Liber Mutus*, will plainly perceive, that the first Matter is taken from the Air; but by a Method very different from that which I here suggest, tho' possibly they may both contribute to the same End, since it is easy to conceive, that the

from all this, that if the Hermetic Philosophers have in reality any such Secret as they boast of, for the Preservation of human Life, it is built upon the same Principles with those which I have already laid down, and consequently no true Adept can, consistently with his own Notion of Things, oppose my Doctrine, especially when he considers with what Restrictions it is offered, since I do not propose, as the Sages do, the prolonging Man's Life to the Term of a thousand Years, neither do I promise the Renovation of Life, as some meaner Artists have done ; all I contend for, is the Possibility of making such Use of youthful Spirits, as, for a Time, to keep off the Inconveniencies of Age, which, though far inferior to what others assert they are able to perform, would still be of the utmost Benefit to Mankind, if with Facility it could be carried into Practice.

I know very well it may, and I doubt not but it will be objected, if *Hermippus* was so wise a Man, why, instead of drawing old Age to such a Length, did he not preserve the Vigour of his Youth ? This surely would have been by far a nobler Discovery, and to which the young Ladies would with the greatest Readiness have contributed. But I must put such People as these in mind, that as, in this Treatise, I have inserted nothing which may not be some way or other serviceable, either to the Instruction or Entertainment of Mankind, so I shall not think myself at all obliged to take Notice of any ludicrous Reflections. The Preservation of Life, the defending the human Body from Decay, and of rendering it a fit Tenement for the Soul to inhabit, in that Season in which she is most capable of exerting her noblest Faculties, are grave and serious Subjects ; with which no trivial Matters the first Matter of the Philosophers may reside in several Places ; nay, some of them have affirmed, that it is to be found every where ; the famous Jacob Boehmen asserted, that it was to be met with in the Dirt of the Streets,

ought to mingle. Besides, to speak my Opinion freely, though I think the Method of *Hermippus* extremely proper for repairing the Wastes of Nature, and preventing the Inconveniences which usually attend on Years ; yet I am far from believing, that this Method would contribute at all to the Extention of Youth, but rather the contrary ; and for this, I think, I am able to offer some very probable Reasons.

In the first Place it will be necessary to observe, that I do not here mean by Youth a State of Infancy or Childhood, but rather that robust State between twenty-five and forty ; for the Conversation of very young People with each other, I conceive to be as wholesome for their Bodies, as it is pleasant and agreeable to their Minds. But when the human Body is arrived at its full Strength, and is in that State of Health in which Temperance and Equanimity will maintain it, a Surcharge of animal Spirits may not only prove useless, but dangerous. It is an old, and a very true Observation, that the most florid State of Health is that in which a Man is in the greatest Peril, in case he receives any Infection ; and the Reason is obvious, *viz.* because the animal Spirits act then with the utmost Vigour, and consequently must do the more Mischief, if by any means they are tainted. From the same Method of Reasoning we may conclude, that such a Manner of Living, as that which we have supposed *Hermippus* led, might be attended with Inconveniences to a Man of a robust Constitution, and, perhaps, incline him to Frenzies, or at least to Fevers. A pure Air, light Diet, moderate Exercise, and a perfect Dominion over his Passions, with a few slight Remedies taken on proper Occasions, and according as Nature directs, may maintain a Man in the full Possession of Health and Spirits to sixty, and then it is Time enough for him to think of avoiding the Inconveniences

niencies which usually attend old Age. I might also observe, that the Conversation of many young Women might, in the Summer of Life, draw along with it other Inconveniencies ; but these are Subjects on which I do not chuse to insist, because it is not easy to treat them with that Delicacy which a philosophic Discourse like this requires ; and because the slightest Hint is sufficient to suggest more to a Man of good Sense than is at all necessary to be delivered upon this Subject. I take it therefore for granted, that I have assigned the proper Bounds to my Remedy, and that I may safely define it the Cordial of advanced Years, which can never be safely administered, till, from a just Application of Reason, there has been produced an absolute Retreat of Appetite⁽ⁿ⁾.

But if any should be mad enough to pursue this Objection further, and cry out, of what Significancy then is your Remedy ? Why, in such a Situation, would you extend Life at all, or of what Use is Years when deprived of Enjoyments ? If, I say, there are any so wild as to talk in this Manner, my Answer is, that they mistake my Meaning. I am clearly of Opinion, that the Pleasures of the Mind are far superior to all sensual Delights, and that the cultivating youthful Understandings, which is the Business in which I have supposed my old Man employed, is a pleasant and noble Undertaking, every way worthy of the Souls supremest Faculties, and carrying along with it its own Reward, *viz.* a second Youth, more pleasing, more delightful, than the first. For as, on the one hand, I cannot allow that such a Person should gratify, or so much as feel his Passions ; so, on the other, I would not have him plunged into deep and perplexing Studies, but rather amused and diverted by Pursuits of another Nature. At particular Seasons, indeed,

(n) Cicero de Senectute,

he might discourse with his Friends on grave and serious Topics ; but I would not have such Conversations return too frequently, for fear of their leading him by Degrees into Melancholy, which is nothing else but fixing the Thoughts too intently on a single Object. In order to acquire and maintain a green old Age there is nothing so requisite as Chearfulness of Mind, which can never be secured, if we meditate much on abstruse Subjects. I do not say that these are always to be neglected ; but what I say is, that this is not the Season of Life in which they ought to be pursued. They require such Vigour, such Attention, and such a Degree of Penetration, as would induce so great a Waste of Spirits as would defeat the Intention of that Remedy which I would recommend, and therefore I lay it down as a supplemental Rule, that these are to be avoided.

There is, as far as my Foresight will carry me, but one Objection more, that can be raised against my System ; and this must come from the Quarter of the Politicians, who conceive nothing to be right or worthy of Encouragement, which does not square with their Notions ; which are, however, generally speaking, not very agreeable to those of other Men. It would not therefore surprize me, if these Gentlemen should take it into their Heads to treat this as a whimsical and trifling Performance, because I know that, according to their System, old Men are so many Incumbrances, of which the State ought to be discharg'd. It is upon this Principle, I presume, that some *Indian* Nations make great Feasts in their Families when their Chief becomes decrepit, and, when these Rejoicings are over, fairly put him out of the Way (o). Our Free-thinkers in Politics, therefore, must

(o) I remember to have read in a late French Writer, that this is practis'd by some of the barbarous Nations who live in the Neighbourhood of Hudson's Bay ; and he says further, that he was
pre-

must necessarily have a bad Opinion (at least while they are young) of such a Proposition as this, which intends no more than prolonging the Lives of those, who, in the Account of our *Machiavelists*, ought to be in their Graves already. What Benefit, say they, can result to Society from maintaining People past their Labours, and who, according to this very Scheme, are declared unfit for Propagation? The Public is only benefited by active and industrious Persons; why then should so much Care be taken to preserve People fit only for a sedentary Life? If the ordinary Laws of Nature can be dispensed with, let it be in Favour of the Publick Weal; why should the extravagant Desire of Life be gratified rather than any other extravagant Desire whatever? Reflections like these, it is evident, must induce these over-wise Persons to treat my Book with Contempt, whatever Opinion they may have of the Arguments contained in it; and therefore it is necessary for me to shew, that these Maxims, how plausible, how refined soever they may appear, are very far from being either just or reasonable; and, which is still of greater Weight in the present Case, are far from being calculated for the Benefit of Mankind in general (p).

It

present at one of these Feasts, at the Close of which the Son cut the Throat of his Father. I do not recollect that he bestows any Reflections upon this Passage; but, from the Account he has given us of the Country, I think it no difficult Matter to distinguish the Cause of so inhuman (I should be in the wrong to call it so brutal) a Custom, which I take to be this, that they find it very difficult in that Part of the World to acquire Subsistence, and therefore think themselves under a Kind of Necessity of maintaining only such as are useful. This, I persuade myself, was the Original of so horrid a Practice, which cannot, however, be founded on real Necessity, because these People, who murder their Parents, preserve their Children, though equally helpless.

(p) It may be, perhaps, thought I exaggerate a little in supposing that there are People capable of reasoning in such a Manner; but whoever

It is, I think, a Fact so well established, that I need be at no great Pains to prove it, that most of the Mischiefs and Miseries brought upon private Families, and even upon whole Nations, flow from the Warmth of Mens Passions, and from their indulging their irregular Inclinations at the Expence of others, nay and of Society itself. I cannot, therefore, help thinking, that it might be a Mean of lessening these Evils, if we could encrease the Number of those who are free from such irregular and depraved Appetites, and are consequently most capable of conducting with Judgment and Integrity either publick or private Affairs. It is remarkable, that, in all well-governed States, a certain Maturity of Age is required before Men are entrusted, not only with the Management of public Concerns, but of their own. Upon what Reason then is this founded? Is it not because they

whoever considers the Principles of the Spartan Government, and the System of Morals recommended by Lycurgus, will be of another Opinion. Neither are we to imagine, that only severe Politicians are inclined to such a Doctrine; there have been in all Ages some politic Writers, and refined Wits, who have been inclined to treat old Age, not as a Misfortune only, but as a Crime. For Instance, Cornelius Gallus, one of the Favourites of Augustus, and himself the Patron of Virgil, and of Horace, paints old Age thus:

Stat dubius tremulusq; senex, semperq; malorum
Credulus, et stultus quæ facit ipse timet
Laudat præteritos, præsentis despicit annos:
Hoc tantum in rectum quod facit ipse putat.

Trembling and doubtful still the Old we find,
And much to Credit all ill News inclin'd;
Foolishly fearful of what e're they do,
And when 'tis done, they're apprehensive too.
Past Time's their Praise, the present claim their Spight,
And only what they do themselves is right.

are thought to want, in the first place, the Lights of Experience ; and in the next, to be too much hurried by their Passions ? If this be right, and if it not be right, the wisest Men in all Ages have been in the wrong ; if this I say be right, why should we fancy Men pass'd their Labours, for being in Possession of those Qualities which are certainly the first Ingredients in the constituting true Wisdom ? There will be always People enough in the World full of that Heat, Vigour, and Strength which is requisite for carrying on the active and laborious Parts of Business ; but we see plainly, that private Families are brought to Ruin, and, by degrees, great States decay for want of that Moderation, Experience, and Foresight, of which Men, far in Years, and whose Spirits are not oppress'd with the Infirmities of Age, are usually possessed. If, therefore, we regard the Ease and Happiness of Mankind, rather than Hurry and Noise, and esteem such a Government as preserves its Subjects in the constant Enjoyment of these Blessings, better than that which employs them at the Expence of their own Ease and Happiness, in disturbing those of their Neighbours, then there can be no Weight in this part of the Objection. As to what respects Generation, it is a very slight and idle Surmise ; for if, in Popish Countries, *Monasteries* are found no great Inconvenience, where those that fill them make Vows of Celibacy in the Flower of their Age, certainly for Men, who are turn'd of Seventy, to forbear getting Children, can never be an Inconvenience to any State.

This is undoubtedly a sufficient Answer, as to the general Reasoning of those I would refute ; but with Respect to the Doctrine I have endeavour'd to establish, a still clearer and more explicit Answer might be given. For without enquiring whether their Principles be wrong or right, I may easily observe, that nothing I have laid down

down tends to burthen Society with a Race of Dottards. What I propose is quite the contrary. If, on the one hand, I plead for the Extention of human Life, I recommend, on the other, such a Method as must preserve the Faculties in the highest Order. Nor is it to be at all apprehended, that the Number of Men who shall prolong their Lives by this Method, in case it should be ever carried into Practice, will be excessive, or burthenfome to Society; the very Nature of it provides against any such Inconvenience, by requiring such Moderation and Self-denial, as will not frequently be found. It is, therefore, an unjust and unfair Imputation upon my Principles, that they tend to burthen the World with uselefs People, since the utmost to which they can be strained is, that I am for preserving as long as possible, the Lives of such as may be useful. As to the Subsistence again of such People, it is easy to discern, that this can be but a very trifling Expence, when compared even with what they are able to acquire towards the Increase of the common Stock. So that, considered in this, which is the very worst Light in which the Thing can be put, a true Politician, and one who has a proper Regard for the Interest, and, at the same Time, a just Respect for the Rights of Mankind, will be far from thinking that I have offered any Thing which can be prejudicial to a well-ordered Society, but have rather provided a very good Method for securing a constant Supply of such Counsellors, as may preserve it in the best Order possible.

On this Occasion, I beg Leave to cite a Passage which *Tully* hath put into the Mouth of the elder *Cato* (9), that deserves as much Attention from its Solidity, and good Sense, as it does Praise for the Beauty and Accuracy of Style in which it is delivered. *Cato* is

(9) Cicero de Senectute, c. ii.

there

there answering the very Objection, which I have been treating. " If, *says he*, Petulance or Lust be Vices more frequent among young Men than old, yet all young Men are not infected with them, but such only as want proper Talents; so it is with that Sort of Disorder which you call Dotage, it is indeed the Dis-ease of old Men, but however all old Men are not infected with it. *Appius* was for some Years quite dark, and yet he managed a Family of four Sons grown up, and five Daughters, with Abundance of of Relations and Clients, who depended upon him. He kept his Mind always in Order, and though his Vigour decayed, yet his Senses never failed him. He preserved to the last Moment his Character, and his Authority: Every Body looked up towards him as became their Station; his Slaves feared, his Children revered, and all who were about him loved him. In a Word, he kept up the old Discipline, and did honour to the *Roman* Name, by preserving the Manners of his Family untainted. So that it is plain, old Age may maintain a graceful Superiority, if it be jealous of its Prerogative; if on all Occasions it maintains its Right, if it never sneaks and gives way, but keeps up a manly Spirit to the last. For as I approve some Qualities of Age in a young Man, so a youthful Spirit is very commendable in Men of Years, for while they preserve this, though the Body may feel the Effects of Age, yet the Mind stands out of its Reach. At this very Instant I am employed in writing the *Seventh* Book of my *Antiquities*, and am actually making large Collections from such old Records as may serve my Purpose. I likewise review, and sometimes touch a-fresh, the Orations I have formerly made in the capital Causes, wherein I have been concerned: I still keep up my Stock of

" Know-

“ Knowledge in the Augurial, Pontifical, and Civil Law,
 “ and have Time enough to read a great deal of *Greek*
 “ besides. I constantly use the *Pythagorean* Method
 “ for the Exercise of my Memory, and every Evening
 “ run over in my Mind whatever I have said, heard or
 “ done that Day. These are the Exercises of the Under-
 “ standing, and in these, as in a Chariot, the Soul takes
 “ the Air; while I am capable of these, I don’t give my-
 “ self much concern about bodily Decays, I am always
 “ at the Command of my Friends attend the Service of
 “ the House frequently, and distinguish myself in De-
 “ bates, wherein a Man compasses more by Strength of
 “ his Faculties, than he can do elsewhere by Force of
 “ Arms. But should it ever prove my Misfortune to be
 “ confined to my Bed, and be thereby rendered incap-
 “ able of going through these Employments, yet the very
 “ Thoughts of what I would do, if I were able, would
 “ console me. But Thanks be to Heaven, I have no Rea-
 “ son to apprehend any such Thing, I have been a bet-
 “ ter Husband of my Time than so, for let a Man be
 “ but constantly exercised in Labours like these, and he
 “ will not so soon find the Breaches of Age. Years will
 “ steal upon him insensibly, he will grow old by degrees,
 “ and without feeling it; nay, when he comes to break
 “ at last, the House will crumble gently, and fall down
 “ so slowly, as not to give him any great Pain”. This
 is a very fine Picture, and contains a more finished Apolo-
 gy for that State of Life which I am endeavouring to
 extend, than my Abilities would suffer me to draw; but
 the very producing it serves my Purpose better than if
 I had wrote it. If I follow the Sentiments of *Cicero*,
 and the Example of *Cato* the Elder, who shall question
 either my Sense, or my Conduct?

It ought to be further considered, that, for perfecting
 many of the Sciences, a longer Life is requisite than
 Men

Men usually enjoy ; or to speak with greater Propriety, the free Exercise of their Faculties to a more advanced Age. If we examine all the Improvements that have been made in true Science, we shall find, that they have proceeded from Men, who have exercised their Thoughts in such Kind of Studies for a long Course of Years. The last Books of *Aristotle* are esteemed the most perfect, so are those of *Seneca*, which he wrote in an advanced Age ; and we may say the same Thing with respect to modern Philosophers ; such as *Gassendi*, *Bacon*, and *Newton*. A serene old Age is therefore of the highest Consequence in this respect, since it would contribute to furnish the World with new and useful Lights, and prevent the Expectations they conceive from the early Productions of great Men, from being frustrated, as they frequently are, by their premature Deaths. I must likewise observe, that mechanical Inventions require much Time to perfect them, and that very profitable Discoveries, and very useful Manufactures, have been lost by the Deaths of those who first cultivated them, of which many Instances might be given. We may likewise remark, that settling any new Plantation, reforming a Society, or, in short, reducing any People who have been long under an ill Form of Government, or in a great measure without any, requires Length of Days. *Lewis XIV.* changed entirely the Face of Things in *France* during his Reign, which was principally owing to the Length of it, as it gave him an Opportunity of seeing most of his Schemes brought to bear ; whereas, the unexpected Death of the Great Czar *Peter* caused many of his Projects to be buried in Oblivion, and must have overturned the whole of his glorious Design for reforming his Subjects, and raising the Credit of his Crown, with the rest of the *European* Powers ; if, which was scarce to be expected, his Successors had not, generally speaking,

speaking, persisted in the Pursuit of his Plan. We may therefore easily discern, that such an Extention of Life, as this Treatise proposes, would be so far from contributing to burthen the World with an useless Race of old Men, that it would really furnish it with such People, as are most wanted for the Improvement of Knowledge, the perfecting mechanical Discoveries, and contributing, in other Respects, to the Welfare of Mankind.

Upon the whole, therefore, I think I may very justly conclude, that by examining this ancient Inscription, I have not only exercised my Thoughts in a Manner that may contribute to the Amusement of the Learned; but that I have hinted many Things which may be of publick Utility. In this Respect, indeed, I think, I have made the proper Use of the Inscription; for certainly it is much better to inform ourselves as to Things than Words, and the World would be much more indebted to the Labours of learned Men, if they would pay that Regard to this Maxim which it deserves. What Use would it be of to Mankind, supposing it possible for me to fix the Reign of the *Roman* Emperor, under which *Hermippus* flourished? Or what Thanks would my Readers owe me, if I had endeavoured to discuss, whether he lived to a hundred and fifty-five, or a hundred and fifteen only? Have I not chosen the better Part, in examining what may still be of some Use, viz. by what Method he arrived at so great an Age, and how far it is practicable for us to follow his Method. I think I may go still farther, and affirm, that I have made it at least extremely probable, that the *Anhelitus Puellarum* is in some measure the Breath of Life; in order to which, I hope, I have effectually destroyed some Prejudices that affected the Minds even of People of good Sense, as to the settled Term of human Life, and the Impossibility of prolonging it by Art. I have

have likewise, in the Course of this Dissertation, collected the Sentiments of several great Men, who think, or at least seem to me to think in the same Way that I do, and have thereby given an Opportunity, to the curious and inquisitive Reader, of searching more strictly into their Opinions, in order to do them Justice, in case, after mature Consideration, he thinks that I have failed in so doing.

If this should contribute little to the Elucidation of the present Point, yet it might prove the Means of bringing many Things of Consequence to Light. We have made it evident, by our Citations from old Books, that many of the Discoveries, for which the Moderns are famous, were actually known to the Learned in former Times; whence we may probably conjecture, that some other Things were known to them, with which we are not acquainted, and the rather, because there is scarce any Country where antient Monuments are to be found, but we may discern in them Marks of Skill and Capacity that transcend the Power of modern Workmen, and though these may not be agreeable to the present Taste, which seems to be a handsome Expression for the reigning Humour of Mankind, that changes too often to deserve the Name of a Rule, yet they still manifest great Quickness of Invention, and the Possession of many Arts that are now lost. It is some Credit to Antiquity, that the oldest building in the World, which is the Temple of *Theseus* at *Athens*, is by far the finest; and in Literature again, *Homer* and *Hippocrates* plainly prove, that in Point of Genius, or of Industry, the first Ages are yet unrival'd. There are several Roads which lead to true Wisdom, we may sometimes reach it by going backwards, as well as forwards; and profit as much by detecting the Prejudices of the Moderns, as by refuting the Errors of Antiquity. It is a just Observation of the great
Lord

Lord *Verulam*, that much Learning frees us from those Mistakes into which we are plunged by having only a little. When first the Moderns began to examine the Writings of *Herodotus* and *Pliny*, they found nothing but Absurdities and Improbabilities; but now, that we are better acquainted with experimental Philosophy, we begin to have a better Opinion of these Authors, and are obliged to confess, that, in some Cases, Sagacity may supply Experience. I am, however, ready to admit, that in some Branches of Science, we may have outdone the Antients very much; but what of that, we are still far short of Perfection. Our very Discoveries prove it; for Example, we discern the Effects of Gravity, we see the whole Mechanism of the Universe depend upon it; but the Cause has been hither to inexplicable. We are well acquainted with the many Properties of the Needle, which were Secrets to former Times, but the Cause of its Variation remains a Secret to us. We have indeed made some bold Guesses at both, and it is not impossible, that Posterity may be able to demonstrate our Conjectures; as it is on the other hand likewise possible, that they may prove them to be only idle Conjectures. If we would avoid being deceived, we must decline Bigotry of all Sorts, we must not carry our Veneration for the Antients too far, and, at the same Time, we ought not to be afraid of using a just Freedom with the Moderns; since it is not our Business to admire others, but to instruct ourselves.

With the same View of coming at Truth, by setting the Subject, of which I treat, in different Lights, I have stated the Opinions of others fairly, and have reasoned upon them as freely as I desire to see my own System treated. I have given the Reader the Sentiments of Astrologers, and of Hermetic Philosophers on this Inscription, and have left it to him to decide, whe-

ther they are more in the Right than I, or whether we may not all be mistaken, and this Inscription have at last some other Secret, and yet more probable Sense than any of us have reached. To encourage an exact Discussion of this, I have often inculcated the Usefulness of such an Enquiry, and I think, have fully proved without the Possibility of a Reply, that as it is very practicable to extend the Thread of Life beyond that Length to which it usually reaches, so this will be a real Benefit and not an idle or trifling Discovery. These are the principal Points that I have laboured, and to avoid that Heaviness and Dryness which is commonly complained of in Discourses of this Kind, I have frequently made Excursions for the Entertainment of myself and my Readers, and have inserted Abundance of curious Passages from scarce and valuable Books, that, I hope, will make full amends for the Trouble of perusing this Treatise, even to such as may remain unconvinced of the Truth or Practicability of my System. At least, I can say this for my Book, and for myself, that nothing has been omitted within the Reach of my Power, which might render it at once both profitable and pleasant; and therefore, I hope, that if any one shall take the Trouble of criticising it, he will at least treat it with that Candour and good Manners which I have used through the whole, and not with that surly and pedantic Peevishness, which is too often visible in the Works of minor Critics, who value themselves much more on exposing the Faults of other Men, than on manifesting any valuable Qualities in themselves, and are better pleased to destroy an Edifice erected by an other, than to acquire a just Reputation, by raising a better Structure of their own.

There is one Thing more I must remark, and it is this, that my System is entirely on the right Side. I have

have not undertaken to demonstrate, as many have done, a Paradox in the Teeth of common Sense, and the common Interest of the human Species, of which the famous Encomium on Folly, and the Panygerick on Drunkenness, are glaring Instances; but what I have laid down in this Discourse is with a View to the public Utility, and from a Desire of doing good; if therefore, upon thoroughly sifting this Dispute, the Matter should come at last to be in Equilibrio, I hope the Turn of the Scale will be allowed me; for surely, if Sense be preferable to Dotage, Ease to Pain, or Life to Death, I have a fair Title to this Favour. I would not be understood to interest, by this Means, the Inclinations or Prejudices of my Readers, on my Side, for that might prove detrimental to Truth; but I introduce this Remark, to secure me against the Effects of a petulant Humour, which reigns but too much in the World, of disliking whatever has the Appearance of Novelty, and supposing that there is something equally just and wise in maintaining old Opinions against new, and in running down any System upon its first Appearance. Against this unequitable Prepossession, in Favours of antique Notions, I set up this Claim to the good Will of Mankind, founded on the Benefits resulting from my System to the human Species, either considered as Individuals or in Society. It was upon the same Principle, that the late Dr. *Harvey* established his Doctrine of the Circulation of the Blood, which, he justly observed, would exempt the Art of Physic from many Reproaches, and enable us to give a clearer and more rational Account of the animal Oeconomy. On this Basis too, stands the Philosophy of Sir *Isaac Newton*, which is perhaps the noblest Effort of the human Understanding. I do not mean by this to compare my Invention with theirs, or myself to either of those great Men. All I aim at

is to shew, that the greatest Men have had need of Indulgence, when they propounded new Systems; whence I infer, that such a Desire cannot be thought either unjust or unreasonable in the least, as I readily own myself to be.

Here then let me rest this Affair, and after taking so much Pains to render this Work not altogether unworthy the View of the Public, or the Eye of equal and impartial Judges, I resign it freely to their Consideration, and depend upon their Candour and Humanity for the kind Acceptance of my Labours.

F I N I S.



